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PSYCHOLOGY OF THE  
RELIGIOUS LIFE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS  
BEARING UPON CULTURE

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# PSYCHOLOGY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

BY

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## PREFACE

**I**N the present study an attempt is made to describe some of the more significant features of religion, and to discover the causes that give them their peculiar character.

Perhaps a word may be said as to the method used. There are objections, I feel, to basing a psychological account of religion mainly upon answers received from individuals when directly questioned in regard to their religious experience, even when these answers are supplemented by material gathered from life-histories, especially from autobiographies of the religious. It is true that a method which has been followed with signal effect by James, Starbuck, Coe, Pratt, and others is certainly justified. And yet the persons most easily reached by such means are, for the most part, adherents of one and the same religion, they are of the Occident, and naturally show a preponderance of that special type of character that is ready to grant to a stranger an access to the secret places of personality.

To escape some of these difficulties one ought to observe from the standpoint of psychology the religious life of a wide variety of peoples, even those most reticent, and when they are off their guard and without self-consciousness. The prayer, the hymn, the myth, the sacred prophecy—

these, I must believe, still furnish to the psychologist the best means of examining the full nature of religion in its diverse forms. In the outline so obtained the details gained from other sources will then find their proper place. I have accordingly gone first to a number of the great canonical collections, to the epic and to reliable accounts of custom and observance, and only in the second place to the introspective reports of individuals. One thus attains his scientific view of religion mainly from its manner of expression in some vital society, and there is far less danger of laying undue stress on what is exceptional and even morbid. Little need be said of the doubt lest, as psychological evidence, some of the canonical collections should have in them a trace of insincerity. For were we to assume that the Koran, for example, had mingled in it some conscious imposition, this need not destroy its value as evidence of what would fire the Arabic mind, what would give form and direction to the ideal striving of that people. Whatever motives may have entered into such a work, the product must have been psychologically sound ; for men responded to it, accepted it, and made it the basis of a creed, and this is proof positive that it answered to something deep in the nature of those to whom it was addressed.

A word of caution may be given with regard to my use of certain terms. The scripture of any people represents a great historical development, wherein are vestiges of an earlier religious life and of subsequent reforms. For convenience I have often named the whole development by some dominant personal name, calling all that is in the Koran, for instance, 'Mohammedanism,' even though much



of it is known to antedate Mohammed, and much of Moham-  
medanism comes later than the Koran ; and similarly the  
various phases of religion pictured in the Chinese Canon  
have been designated ' Confucianism,' just as ' Zarathus-  
trism ' is roughly used for the variety of life presented in  
the Zend-Avesta.

In quoting from the *Sacred Books of the East* some liberty  
has been taken with extra-textual words. The translator's  
brackets, employed to distinguish additional or explana-  
tory words from those whose equivalents are in the text  
itself, have here been regularly omitted, and in one or  
two instances the bracketed words themselves, where they  
seemed unnecessary. Readers of the present volume would  
doubtless prefer not to have the eye persistently jogged by  
these scholarly reminders, especially since the references  
will permit a ready recovery of the lost niceties by those  
who may desire them. In these references the translator's  
name is usually given in the first citation only ; the numerals  
in round brackets refer to volume and page in the edition of  
the *Sacred Books of the East*. In the case of Homer, while  
in general the version is that of the translators cited, yet  
in a few instances I have ventured to modify slightly a  
phrase of theirs to bring out a little more clearly, as I felt,  
some distinction in the Greek.

The well-known works of Tylor and of Frazer have  
naturally been my most important guide to the study of  
the less civilized peoples. The footnote references to their  
volumes are hardly a sufficient indication, however, of my  
debt ; for wherever it has been possible to consult the  
sources they note, I have usually cited only the earlier

authority. Professor James's volume on *Religious Experience* has inevitably been of influence throughout, even though his writing arouse so often one's admiring opposition. It would carry me to unseemly length to enumerate all the persons to whom I am indebted. I cannot, however, refrain from mentioning in particular the patience and courtesy of the librarians and their assistants at the University of California, the Johns Hopkins University, and the Peabody Institute. The unfailing kindness of Professor David M. Robinson, in response to my troublesome enquiries regarding Greek sources, I shall not easily forget. And, if he will permit me to say it, I am under deep obligation to the Editor of the present *Library*, Professor Muirhead, for the many substantial improvements he has suggested. To the best of teachers, Professor Howison, and to Joseph Worcester, my gratitude for very real assistance is tinged with something close to filial piety.

As for the actual outcome of the work; if one were gifted to set forth what can be observed in such a field, there would certainly be given a vivid and definite impression of the war of motives in religion. At every instant the mind is driven powerfully in opposite directions: it at once clings to and abhors the self and the world, both physical and social; it wishes to act in conflicting ways, and at the same time to remain passive; it depends upon and despises its own powers of sense and of intellect; it would have its divinity both many and one, both near and far, both known and unknown. This inner tension which the facts themselves bring to view—a tension that often goes to the very breaking-point, so that some single clear

motive now completely rules—I have tried to make evident and explain, and to illustrate by like conflicts that are not religious. It is of course but an essay toward a complete account of these things, and I hardly believe that others can feel more keenly than I myself its imperfections.

Finally, I must confess to a certain misgiving at the thought of putting scalpel into anything so quick and sensitive as that with which we are here concerned. Such mistrust ought perhaps to be decisive were not understanding itself a part of reverence, and were it not true that a cold scrutiny of the mind, even when worshipping, is needed to decide what is better and what worse. The saner types of religion will hardly suffer by close inspection nor by placing them in contrast with the more erratic forms.

G. M. S.

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA,  
*September, 1911*





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# PSYCHOLOGY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

## INTRODUCTION

### EXPRESSIONS OF THE SENSE OF CONFLICT

THE labour and duty of understanding religion fall partly to psychology ; and a psychological study shares in the general freedom and restriction of all scientific work. One is here aloof, for the time, from many human interests. For at the moment when he is trying to observe and understand the human mind in its reverence—observe it with that singleness of aim which those have who study the action of light upon plants, or the behaviour of bees in storing honey—the student must shut out so much of himself as is of one blood with the reformer and the philosopher, with the iconoclast and the priest. Yet in his coolness toward their peculiar ends, he has his own zeal and earnestness. He is impelled by a freer intellectual curiosity, and can trace without distraction the natural laws of our response to what supremely impresses us. Such a student is eager solely to follow the intricate turns of cause and effect, having this one unalterable bias, that in human thought and action, even when in the presence of what is held most sacred, natural causes are everywhere at work, and with perseverance can be disclosed.

The aim of a psychological study of religion is to explain, after the manner of science ; but not to explain away nor to support. Its office is not that of the judge, to condemn or approve religion as a whole, or any special features of religion ; such judgment should be by other laws than science furnishes, laws that must be sought in their own way and place. But it is easier to see the uses of such temperance than to practise it. And the present study will at times, I doubt not, pass from the level of pure causal interest to that of the critic and director. Any such departures must be acknowledged as lapses due to infirmity of the flesh, for which the reader will, I hope, have charity. Yet at the close I shall beg a privilege, which most writers have enjoyed, of overstepping bounds and freely pointing out some of the wider bearings of whatever may have been observed.

In the main, this will be the strict work in hand : to group broadly the features of religion and to connect them with the acts of mind that give them form. A convenient and widely accepted division of mental powers into those of feeling and emotion, of will and outer conduct, and of knowledge, may well serve to give order to this infinitely varied material. We shall then see, if possible, how the emotions of common life, and the common ways of conduct and of thinking, extend into religion and show their influence there. Contrasts within the single mind and in the different temperaments of persons and of races will at once appear, and force one to ask whether contrasts of religious life and ideas may not in the end be due to these. In this way it may be possible to discern some of the intricate mental forces that produce variations of belief with regard to human destiny and the divine character and its relation to men and the world. The endless difficulties of such an undertaking, and yet its inherent interest and promise, put one between despair and hope of a happy outcome.

But since our attention will be so long upon the various

forms of the conflict within the religious mood, it may be well to give first of all, and as a kind of preparation for a more minute survey, the projections of this inner conflict outward upon Nature and the world of spirits. It will serve as a kind of index of the struggle within, which man himself often fails to recognize, seeing only its distant reflection and believing this to be all.

In the religious life there is an inherent struggle. The presence of the Supremely Impressive makes the self and other men and all the common goods of life objects at once of value and contempt. Reverence calls forth both hope and fear, both rejoicing and dejection.

And yet men naturally see this conflict, not as wholly in themselves, but at least in part as without: the parts and powers of the world appear to be in mutual strife. There is, however, in peoples and religions a differing sense of this discord. The Greek pictured the world, somewhat as he built his temple, with a certain simple grace; while the Germanic mind, like the Gothic vault with its impenetrable shadows, saw the gloom and the evil close to what is fair. Every people and every person in varying degree reveals a peculiar feeling of the tension of the world.

At times the struggle is felt to occur just within and behind the merely physical succession of day and night, of sunlight and cloud, of summer and winter. These are transmuted by the imagination into an endless war of nature-spirits, where the uncertain victory is only for a while with either of the contending powers. For the Egyptians the light of day must defeat a spirit of the night: Ra, the Sun, sails through the heavens in his boat, and battles with the great serpent Apep, demon of the abyss.<sup>1</sup> The change of the seasons became for many peoples a tale like that of

<sup>1</sup> Book of the Dead, XXXIX, and elsewhere (Budge's tr.); Maspero: *Dawn of Civilization*, tr. McClure, 1894, pp. 90 f.



the mourning for the lost Adonis and the joy in his return, or of Persephone carried away to the sad abode of Hades, but coming again for a while each year to her mother and the upper air. What to the cold eye of science is but a rhythm of day and night, of heat and cold, of budding and leafless trees, becomes for the more mobile and child-like mind a fierce combat of heroes or of monsters. Man's sympathies are engaged, he becomes a partisan of those powers which seem to accord with his own purposes, and soon these great beings are felt to be at heart more friendly than are the spirits which inhabit the night, the winter, or the tempest. The gloomy north, the dark caverns of the earth, the inhospitable spaces beneath the ground, thus become associated usually with hostility, and are peopled with malevolent forms ; while the south, the sun-lit mountain summits, the bright upper air, are the home of kindly powers. And these spirits, or gods, are not only opposite in their attitude toward men ; they are at war with one another. The Earth is thought of as at enmity with the Sky, or the earth-born Giants give battle to the gods of the mountain peaks and of the upper air ; and thus, by this primitive feeling, there becomes fixed for all of us a contrast—not physical or spatial merely, but moral—between low and high, between earth and heaven.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to say where this conflict ceases to be physical and assumes a moral tone. If everything marked by a feeling of friendliness or of hatred is already within the circle of morality, then the tension of the world is presented even in these myths as ethical in a simple way, since it is a contest between forces that stand for social union or disruption. But the moral nature of the strife is clearer in the religions that see the world of spirits divided into those who sympathize with human life and whose aim for man is the same as man's purified aim for himself, and into a host of spirits doing what they can to thwart our plans and to harass the gods who are our help.

Various forms of such an opposition are found among savage peoples, both closely related and not, of which the following may serve as examples : There is an Algonquin belief that beside the ' Master of Life ' who is the maker of heaven and earth, and who loves men, there is a wicked *Manito*, a spirit who tempts men to evil.<sup>1</sup> And in one of their legends the great lord Glooskap, who was worshipped in after days by all the children of light, had an own twin-brother, Wolf the Younger, that began his bad life by bursting wilfully through his mother's side, killing her.<sup>2</sup>—"It is believed by the Pottawatomies, that there are two Great Spirits who govern the world. One is called Kitchemonedo, or the Great Spirit, the other Matchêmonedo, or the Evil Spirit. The first is good and beneficent ; the other wicked. Some believe that they are equally powerful, and they offer homage and adoration through fear. Others doubt which of the two is most powerful, and endeavour to propitiate both. The great part, however, believe as I, Podajokeed, do, that Kitchemonedo is the true Great Spirit, who made the world, and called all things into being ; and that Matchêmonedo ought to be despised."<sup>3</sup>—The same opposition of good and evil is expressed also in an account of the chief deities of the Abnaki, although here we are definitely told that the evil god was the more powerful.<sup>4</sup>—The Great Spirit of the Iroquois delights in virtue and in the happiness of man, whom he created ; but the ' Evil-minded ' (born at the same birth with the Great Spirit) created monsters, poisonous plants, and reptiles, and is ever watchful to scatter discord among men, and multiply their calamities.<sup>5</sup>—Likewise the Mandans believe in the existence of a Great or Good Spirit, and also of an Evil Spirit, who they said existed long before the Good Spirit, and was far

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft : *Myth of Hiawatha*, 1856, pp. 254 f.

<sup>2</sup> Leland : *Algonquin Legends of New England*, 1885, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Schoolcraft : *Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge*, 1860, I, 320.

<sup>4</sup> Bulletin No. 30, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1907, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Morgan : *League of the Iroquois*, 1851, pp. 156 ff.

superior in power.<sup>1</sup>—Farther south in America, among the 'Mozcas,' the god of the sun, called Zuhè or Bochica, was thought to befriend man and to help; while his wife, Huythàca, the Moon, brought to man all manner of difficulty and distress.<sup>2</sup>—So, too, in Dutch Guiana there was the firm belief in the existence of one supreme God, the author of all Nature, and from him comes only good; evils come from the Yowahoos—devils who delight in inflicting death, diseases, wounds, bruises, and all the unlucky accidents of life. "To these Yowahoos, therefore, they direct their supplications, and in affliction use various endeavours to avert, or appease their malevolence; while the adoration of the supreme Deity is entirely neglected."<sup>3</sup>—Among the Africans of Southern Guinea, there is a belief in a spirit, Ombwiri, good and gentle, and in a spirit, Onyambe, hateful and wicked, of whom the people seldom speak, and always show uneasiness and displeasure when his name is mentioned in their presence.<sup>4</sup>—As a final example here, the Khonds of India believe that Boora Pennu, the God of Light, who created the earth and brings all blessings to mankind, has a wicked wife, Tari Pennu, the earth goddess, who is jealous of her husband and tries to prevent his purposes. She it is who instils into the heart of man every kind of moral evil, "sowing the seeds of sin in mankind as into a plowed field," and sends diseases, deadly poisons, and many a trouble.<sup>5</sup>

Here the opposition is represented by individual beings hostile to each other, and the cleft is definite and lasting. A clearly conceived devil, as in much of Christianity or in the Parsee religion, is in conflict with a spirit of goodness. Judaism, with which so much of Christianity is joined, sets forth in its canonical writings the antithesis of good and

<sup>1</sup> Catlin: *North American Indians*, 1842, I, 156.

<sup>2</sup> Piedrahita: *Conquistas del Nuevo Reyno de Granada*, pt. I, ch. III.

<sup>3</sup> *Natural History of Guiana*, by a 'Gentleman of the Medical Faculty' [Edw. Bancroft], 1769, pp. 308 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson: *Western Africa*, 1856, pp. 387, 217.

<sup>5</sup> Macpherson: *Memorials of Service in India*, 1865, pp. 84 ff.



evil in less sharpened form. The reporter of wrong, in the Book of Job, is no more a demon than is Agni in the Vedas, who too reports men's sins to the gods.<sup>1</sup> From God himself comes what men desire and what they hate: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."<sup>2</sup> And in somewhat similar contrast, the religion of Zarathustra with its polar opposition of right and wrong, is closely related to the Vedic religion where the antithesis of good and evil is far less pointed. In Buddhism particularly, which is one of the later kindred of the Vedic faith, neither the good nor the bad is seen as a supreme Person; but a great impersonal order contains on the one side a kind of illusion, a desire for individuality, which is evil; while in contrast with this stands escape from personal existence, unconsciousness, and this alone is good. Or perhaps more exactly one should say that for a great division of the Buddhists there is neither God nor Devil, although on another side, as we shall soon see, this impersonal character of the opposition is not maintained, but evil takes a personal form in the demon Mâra.

But the variation in the sense of discord is revealed not alone in a fluctuation between the personal and the impersonal form of opposition. It has also its different ways, in that the struggle is now projected outward chiefly, or again is seen to lie largely in the soul of man. As the worshipper gradually becomes aware that righteousness is the good beyond all else, the work of evil seems to be directed toward the human heart. The influence of the Evil One is felt not so much in pain and outward misfortune, as in temptation. Especially do the powers of darkness try to prevent those greatest revelations of the law which come to the prophet and founder of the religion. The moments of clearest insight are felt to be unusually fateful for the soul, and are preceded or followed by a supreme struggle with

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, IV, 3, 5 (XLVI, 325), tr. Oldenberg.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah, XLV, 6 f.

the foes of heaven. Zarathustra must meet and vanquish the hell-born Angra Mainyu. "From the regions of the north, from the regions of the north, forth rushed Angra Mainyu, the deadly, the Daêva of the Daêvas," but he was met by the Holy One chanting the sacred words, "The Will of the Lord is the law of holiness," and using also carnal means—stones big as a house, supplied to him by the Spirit of Goodness. Angra Mainyu commands the Teacher to renounce the law of God, and promises him that he will become a ruler of nations. But answering 'No,' the Holy One completes his victory in a solemn prayer beginning, "This I ask thee: teach me the truth, O Lord!"<sup>1</sup> And the Prince Sidartha, under the tree of enlightenment, must overcome the tempter Mâra and all his demon host before he could become the perfect vessel of the law, the Buddha. The troop of tempters—some with heads like snakes or savage tigers—encircled on its four sides the Bodhi tree, belching forth flames and steam. But they and all their storm and conflict cannot move the Bodhisattva, "fixed and well-assured." An angel host sing their confidence in him, the arch-demon slinks away and soon his whole band is scattered, "whilst from above a fall of heavenly flowers pay their sweet tribute to the Bodhisattva." And soon thereafter, now become the Buddha, he sees truth face to face.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the refinement of the sense of harmony and discord brings other things to pass. For a time the conflicting forces are felt to lie asunder, to be alien to each other. But in the subtler moods of the religious fancy, the evil and the good are bound by the closest tie, often springing from the same source. Even among the instances already given from savage faith, the kindly and the ill-disposed spirits are sometimes joined by the family bond: the kindly god has a wicked wife or twin-brother. And other peoples have expressed this curious feeling of the affinity of opposites.

<sup>1</sup> Zend-Avesta, Vendtdâd, XIX, 1 (IV, 204 ff.), tr. Darmesteter.

<sup>2</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, III, 13 f. (XIX, 147 ff.), tr. Beale.

With the Greek, for whom the impulse was strong to conceive the deepest contrast, not as of good-will and ill-will, but as of beauty and ugliness, the limping grimy smith-god Hephæstos is wedded, in the Homeric story, to Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty. The deformed god Bes of the Egyptians is occupied with rouge, the mirror, and other articles of the toilet.<sup>1</sup> And in the Persian legend, the Demon, Azi Dahâka—hideous, most fiendish, three-mouthed, three-headed—has two wives, Savanghavâk and Erenavâk, the fairest of all women, the most wonderful creatures of the world.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps in part by some kindred feeling of the closeness of conflicting powers, Osiris, the Egyptian god of blessing, has a twin-brother, Set, who becomes the god of evil;<sup>3</sup> or Horus himself is two-headed, the one head being of truth, the other of wickedness.<sup>4</sup>

But the Northern mind expresses in more romantic imagery the closeness of evil to the good. Many of the gods of the Teutons are themselves subject to some remarkable defect: Baldr is mortal and is slain by means of the mistletoe, Hôdhr is blind, Tyr lacks a hand, Odhin an eye.<sup>5</sup> With the Finns, the creative hero, Wainamoinen, sows in the barren earth the seeds of trees and shrubs, and all grow but the acorn. And when the oak, most desired of all, finally springs up, it grows mightily until it fills all the sky, and shuts out the light of sun and moon and stars, and what is longed for becomes a curse. Yet the very tree which brings peril to men and heroes, in the end becomes a blessing. For when at last it has been felled, whoever obtains from it a leaf or branch has gained the master-magic, has eternal good, and delight that never fails.<sup>6</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Steindorff: *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, 1905, p. 21. Cf. de la Saussaye: *Manual of the Science of Religion*, tr. Colyer-Fergusson, 1891, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> Zend-Avesta, Gôş Yast, III, 14 (XXIII, 113).

<sup>3</sup> Book of the Dead, XVII, 67 ff.; IX, 3; IV, 2; Sayce: *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, 1902, pp. 135, 153 f., 162; and cf. Rawlinson's note to *Herodotus*, Bk. II, ch. 171.

<sup>4</sup> Book of the Dead, XVII, 27 ff.; and cf. CLXXX, 35.

<sup>5</sup> de la Saussaye: *Religion of the Teutons*, tr. Vos, 1902, pp. 255, 285.

<sup>6</sup> Kalevala, Rune II (Crawford's translation, 1888, pp. 14 ff.).

strange alternation, evil here springs from good, and good from ill. And in other ways, what to the mind of many has seemed a fit source of goodness, is for this grim people an origin of wrong. The Virgin Untamala gives fatherless birth to a Son of Evil, Kullervo.<sup>1</sup> And at the very crowning of success in many an exploit, dark bodings issue from the lips of a babe upon the floor.<sup>2</sup> It would be difficult to exceed the sombre shading, the moral irony, of such a view as this.

But the differing feeling as to the intimacy of jarring factors is expressed in still other ways. For some peoples or types of mind the conflict is still in progress, while for others peace has now been won and the evil has been subdued. The struggle between the opposing forces is thus for some a still present struggle ; for others it is a distant tradition and had existence only in some dark antiquity. The supporters of Boora and of Tari, gods of the Khonds of India already mentioned, divide upon this point. The one sect declares that Boora, the good spirit, has triumphed over Tari, the spirit of evil, and as an abiding sign of her discomfiture has imposed the cares of childbirth on her sex, and has made her an instrument of his own moral rule, permitting her to strike only where he desires to punish. Tari's adherents, on the contrary, declare that she is unconquered and still maintains the struggle and has power to bestow blessings and to prevent the coming of good from Boora.<sup>3</sup> With the Homeric Greeks, the great struggle of the universe was referred to the dimmest past. The Titans had long ago been defeated, and all the older race of gods had been imprisoned far away. Thus the victory for the new order had already been securely won. Far different is it with Zarathustrism and with Christianity. Here, too, there are accounts of ancient struggles between the powers of darkness and of light ; but for both religions

<sup>1</sup> Kalevala, Rune XXXI (Crawford, 498).

<sup>2</sup> Rune XIX (Crawford, 292 ff.) ; Rune XXV (Crawford, 399 f.).

<sup>3</sup> Macpherson : *Memorials of Service in India*, 1865, pp. 87 f.



there is a sublime conflict still in progress and long to last. For the Persian religion, the Good Mind and the Evil have still their separate realms, and upon men there is the responsibility of choosing aright between the rival powers.<sup>1</sup> The ever-present fiends must still be smitten, especially when night comes over the land. Then Sraosha, the never-sleeping guardian of the works of Mazda, "protects all the material world with his club uplifted, from the hour when the sun is down."<sup>2</sup> In the sacred writings of Christianity, too, the Devil is a living active power. The whole armour of God is needed to withstand his power. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood," it is said in the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, "but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places."<sup>3</sup> Our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."<sup>4</sup> And while the victory over him is assured, and he is to be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone where are the beast and the false prophet, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever,<sup>5</sup> yet this is not yet actually accomplished, and can be seen only by the eye of faith. The closest and most present fact is here the discord; while for the Greek we might say that faith was required to see that the universe had ever been troubled to its heart.

But in many cases, along with the thought of a conflict of great beings in the past, or perhaps instead of such a conflict, there is the representation of a discord or contradiction between man's condition now and his life at some distant epoch. Often the present miseries of the world are contrasted with a happy existence which men once had upon the earth, and which in many cases they will again enjoy. The golden age when Saturn ruled the world; the ancient

<sup>1</sup> Zend-Avesta, Gâthas, XXX, 1-11 (XXXI, 29 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Srôsh Yast, II (XXIII, 162 f.). For a view of Daêvas and evil in the Gâthas, see esp. Yasna XXXII (XXXI, 56 ff.). By a prudent regulation in Vendidad VIIa, (IV, 83 f.), a surgeon, before being licensed to practise on the faithful, must try his hand successfully upon the worshippers of these demons.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians, VI, 12.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Peter, V, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Revelation, XX, 10.

time when, as the Egyptians believed, the gods reigned upon earth ; the life in the happy Garden that lay eastward of Eden wherein even the Lord delighted to walk—these are familiar forms in which the thought appears. It is an almost universal belief. We find men in modern India holding that there was a time when all enjoyed free intercourse with the Creator, when goods were possessed in common and there was no need of labour, and the beasts of the forest were harmless, and men had the power to move through the water and the air ; until a wicked spirit sowed evil and changed it all.<sup>1</sup> We find in ancient Mexico the legend of the blessed reign of the god Quetzalcoatl, teacher of morals, prohibiter of war, enemy of human sacrifice, in whose time the earth brought forth in plenty ; until he was driven to exile and wanderings by the bloody god Tetzcatlipoca ; but only for a time, for white brothers of the god of blessing were to come and rule men later in truth and happiness—a hope which only for a moment seemed fulfilled in the coming of the Spaniards.<sup>2</sup> Here, as with the Jews, the present was seen dark against the background of a happy life, both in the past and in the future. And this, too, was the faith of the Avesta. For the Persians, there was a time when Yima, the good shepherd, possessing the awful glory of Mazda, was ruler over the seven regions of the earth, and had despoiled the demons, and under his sway there was no envy nor lack for men or flocks. Hunger and thirst, old age and death, hot winds and cold, remained from the world for a thousand years, until Yima began to delight in falsehood, when the divine glory was seen to depart from him thrice in the form of a bird.<sup>3</sup> But a Deliverer is to come. The Saoshyant, the Beneficent One, will be born in due time, coming from the region of the dawn. He will look upon the whole living world with the eye of intelligence, with the eye of plenty, and his look

<sup>1</sup> Macpherson : *Memorials of Service in India*, 1865, pp. 85 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft : *Native Races of the Pacific Coast*, 1886, III, 250 ff. 259.

<sup>3</sup> Zend-Avesta, Zamyâd Yast, VII (XXIII, 293 ff.) ; Gôş Yast, II (XXIII, 112) ; and cf. Vendidad, II (IV, 11 ff.).

shall bring immortality to the whole of the living creatures. Then shall the world become the master of its wish, the dead shall rise, the demon Drug shall perish, she and all her hellish brood.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Chinese there was a time when the Grand Course was followed, in the reign of the Sage Kings; then generosity and widespread love prevailed and all virtues. No floods afflicted men, the earth gave forth wine, and animals and men lived in mutual trust.<sup>2</sup> This blessed age of the Chinese was seen in sharp contrast with those barbarous times when even kings dwelt in caves or nests, and ate their meat raw and with hair or feathers, and had only skins for clothing, since they knew not fire nor the art of weaving cloth, before sages arose to teach men how to live and how to worship.<sup>3</sup> Here the dark features of the present life are seen against an even darker past, and the bright against a brighter—a gloomy and a cheerful idealization which seizes and exaggerates the opposing elements of experience. This double tendency is represented also among other peoples, in that there appeared not merely a golden age, but also, even in the past, a time of heavenly anger and retribution—the gods visiting the earth with a flood, and holding but the smallest remnant of men worthy to be saved. There is consequently both a *laus* and a *damnatio temporis acti*. But on the whole the temptation to glorify antiquity has been more strong and universal.

In this respect we seem to be moved, in our thought of remote time, by quite different impulses from those which the unspoiled man feels with regard to distant places. Modern tourists, like the old navigators, come home with a large tale of the goods as well as the ills of obscure corners of the earth. But in general, human beings love their own

<sup>1</sup> Zend-Avesta, Vendidad, XIX, 5 (IV, 205); Farvardin Yast, XXVIII (XXII, 220 f. and see note p. 195); Zamyâd Yast, III, XV, XVI (XXIII, 290 f., 306 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Lî Kî, VII, 1, 2 (XXVII, 364 ff.); VII, 4, 16 (XXVII, 392 f.); cf. Tâo Teh King, I, 17, 18 (XXXIX, 60 f.).

<sup>3</sup> Lî Kî, VII, 1, 8 f. (XXVII, 369).

sky. "It is not easy to persuade a native of Isfahan," we are told, "that any European capital can be superior to his native city."<sup>1</sup> In a similar spirit, the head-man of Deh-Shir, a most remote oasis-town of the sandy desert of Persia, repeatedly expressed a doubt to an American visitor whether any land could be half so beautiful as Iran.<sup>2</sup> And by the traveller in America to-day, each region is found to be for its own dwellers best—much as the old missionary Father Biard, centuries ago, found the Indians immeasurably content and incredulous that the French could be richer or more blest than they.<sup>3</sup> This satisfaction with the place of one's abode so struck the Persian that he felt impelled to explain it. "Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama Zarathustra saying: 'I have made every land dear to its dwellers, even though it had no charms whatever in it: had I not made every land dear to its dwellers, even though it had no charms whatever in it, then the whole living world would have invaded the Airyana Vaêgô.'"<sup>4</sup> Less care seems to have been given to make men content with their own times, perhaps because it is more difficult to leave them.

What has been said regarding the present oppositions of life and their heightened contrast in the past, applies also to the future. For past and future are much alike as regions for constructive imagination. The discordant elements of the world are, in the future, to be set in still stronger contrast and given full development—the good and the evil each going to its own place and finding its own reward. The sense of the incongruity in the present facts is thus expressed in an ideal past and an ideal future, against which the present is seen in strong relief. But the ideal, in this sense, need not give heed only to excellence; there is an evil ideal as well as a good. And so the present may be

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, 4th ed. (1880), Vol. I, p. 260, note.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson: "A Religion nearly Three Thousand Years Old," *Century Magazine*, Sept., 1906, N.S., Vol. L, p. 695.

<sup>3</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, ed. Thwaites, 1896, I, 173.

<sup>4</sup> Zend-Avesta, Vendidad, I, 1 f. (IV, 4).



seen against a dark setting of heroic wrong in antiquity and of endless malignity and torment that is to come. One may well doubt whether these haunting visions are due so exclusively to the human sense of justice, as many have believed, and to the desire to see it vindicated. They may at least in part be but expressions of the satisfaction men feel in whatever occurs on the grand scale—the fascination of viewing without enduring pain, the delight in witnessing destruction as well as growth. The conflicting sides of our present life must, for very art's sake, if for no other reason, be given somewhere a greater play than our actual experience now permits to them. The love of the impressive, regardless of its moral quality, is deep within us, and only late is it chastened and ruled by conscience and a sympathy for human weal. Cruelty in children and in savages makes us suspect its presence as a conquered though living factor in more advanced society, no longer seeking to produce suffering for its own sake, however, but taking a grim joy in it when it does come to one's fellows, whether by war or by the natural calamities of flood or fire, earthquake or pestilence, or by the mere representation of suffering in the form of tragedy upon the stage. The purgation by pity and fear, which tragedy brings, is certainly not the entire measure of its hold upon us.

But the sense that life and the world is tense with opposition is not confined to religion. And so we must look to the appearance of such feelings elsewhere. The religious imagination that hides evil within the good, or links beauty close with ugliness, or, in contrary manner, puts them far apart, expresses in its own way the very thoughts which artists and philosophers have often presented as truths of their own perceiving. For artists have long sought pure beauty, and yet have often ended with a rich harmony that is close to discord, a beauty that shows its power by wresting victory from defeat. And just as religionists see the conflict as having immense differences of depth, so artists differ in their sense of the might of opposition.

Some feel only the conflict and not the final rest, while others feel that there is no conflict. Great artists like Dante, though they see the struggle of opposing aims, yet see it as but partial, and the strength and order of the whole remain unbroken in the clash.

Philosophy shows the same impulses and the same diversity. With some the opposition between the different orders of reality is illusory or superficial; with others it goes deeper, and the universe is divided into realms distinct—like sense and reason in parts of the Platonic system, or mind and matter in much of Scottish thought. Still other philosophers—like those myth-makers who tell us that evil is brother to the good, or that beauty is the bride of ugliness—feel that every reality is bound inwardly to its own opponent. Socrates, in his last days in prison, is represented as dwelling on the closeness of pleasure to pain, as though they had two bodies joined by a single head. Lâo-tze tells us that existence and non-existence give birth the one to the other; that difficulty produces ease, and ease brings difficulty<sup>1</sup>—reminding one of Hegel's elaborate system, where opposites generate each other. All such thinkers feel that, close to every truth, lurks its logical foe, its contradiction. And where the perfect, or the ideal, is still believed in by them, it is a perfection which involves an inner struggle; it subdues and brings to union all the jarring elements of life. The strife and strain of the world, which art and religion find by their peculiar methods, is here discovered and expressed in a purely intellectual form.

This feeling that the Best is no placid best, but has the tense calm of a victor whose foe is down but not destroyed—this feeling may help us to understand a fact which will meet us more than once. Men are prone to inconsistency in religion, as in politics or art. But there is this difference, that the religious seem at times less anxious to avoid such inconsistencies, and appear even to take some joy in the puzzle and paradox of contradiction. In Homer the gods

<sup>1</sup> Tâo Teh King, I, 2 (XXXIX, 48).

are declared to live in bliss, and yet their sorrows are recounted. The Finnish god Ukko is omniscient, yet does not know the hiding-place of the sun. The motives for such contradiction are many and intricate, but to those that will be given later<sup>1</sup> might well be added this, that contradictory statements as to the nature of the gods perhaps set forth, as by a kind of rhetorical symbol, the inscrutable oppositions, the mystery of divinity. The very shock of verbal contradiction stirs simple men to appreciate the strangeness, the rarity, of the object revered. Later the mind may care to thread its way through the maze of opposition, and so to interpret it that there may seem no great strife. But at the moment, the very fact of contradiction seems appropriate to a theme so high. No mere bravado leads old Sir Thomas Browne to declare that, far from being dismayed by intellectual obstacles to belief, there are not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith. Something of this spirit makes it perhaps easier for those who bring together the materials of sacred scripture, the world over, to permit the strangest incongruities to occur in different parts of the canon. Much of it is doubtless due to want of logical acumen, as well as to sheer inability to tamper with what has been handed down. But the divine nature is also for them so rich, so majestic, that it may well be set forth in opposite ways.

Perhaps in part from a motive like this come such statements, in the Vedas, as that Agni, the son of the gods, has become their father;<sup>2</sup> or that Agni, the calf, gives birth by itself to its own mothers;<sup>3</sup> that the Maruts are self-born and born of *Prisni*.<sup>4</sup> Likewise the scripture of ancient Egypt speaks of the gods who "have given birth to their own fathers";<sup>5</sup> and Ra, while self-begotten and self-born, yet

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 237 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Vedic Hymns, I, 69, 2 (XLVI, 67).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 95, 4 (XLVI, 114).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 168, 2, 9 (XXXII, 279 f.); cf. Hymns of the Atharva-Veda, V, 21, 11 (XLII, 132); and pp. 231 ff. of the present vol.

<sup>5</sup> Book of the Dead, CLII, 2; and cf. CLIIIA, and CLIIIB.

has now Nut or again Hathor for his mother.<sup>1</sup> The interpreter of myths might point to the processes in Nature which would, without contradiction, give countenance to some of these expressions. But the very contradictions themselves may well have had for the mind of the poet-worshipper their own inherent fitness. In the Koran we read : " Verily, with difficulty is ease ! verily, with difficulty is ease ! And when thou art at leisure then toil, and for the Lord do thou yearn ! " <sup>2</sup> The appropriateness of such oppositions seems also to be felt in describing objects where religion borders on science. The " self within the heart," in the Upanishads, is declared to be smaller than a grain of rice, than a grain of barley or of mustard, smaller than a canary seed, than even the kernel of a canary seed—greater than earth, sky, heaven, greater than all the worlds.<sup>3</sup> And secular art constantly uses sharp and amazing transitions as one of its accepted means—whether it be in the warring light and shadow of Dutch painting, or in the antithesis of common folk-tales, as when, at the glad wedding of the Rainbow Maiden, a witch tells of the horrors of her own wedded life,<sup>4</sup> or when that wonderful ox which is brought to the wedding feast, so large that no man can slaughter it, so large that a swallow would need a day to fly from one horn-tip to the other, can be slain only by a pigmy whose bed is in a tiny sea-shell.<sup>5</sup> Something of a like spirit is in all those tales where defeat comes from the very direction whence help was to be expected : Cræsus, having dreamt that his son Atys shall die by an iron weapon, attempts to guard him from the danger. But in a boar hunt, ere long, Atys is killed accidentally by the spear of one who was most attached to Cræsus, having received from him a great favour ;<sup>6</sup> thus from a friend comes the fatal blow. The

<sup>1</sup> Book of the Dead, Hymn to Ra, and Hymn to the Setting Sun (Budge, 15 f., 87 f.).

<sup>2</sup> Koran, XCIV (IX, 335), Palmer's tr.

<sup>3</sup> *Khândogya-Upanishad*, III, 14, 3 (I, 48), Müller's tr.

<sup>4</sup> Kalevala, Rune XXIII (Crawford, 364 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Rune XX (Crawford, 299 ff.).

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, I, 34 ff.



mystic temper which delights in denying to the Good everything that can be affirmed, and in affirming everything that can be denied, is but the extremity of that mood which is pleased to declare that the weak things of this world shall confound the mighty, that the non-existent penetrates all things,<sup>1</sup> that swift apprehension is the beginning of stupidity,<sup>2</sup> and which makes the lamb the symbol of power, and the felon's cross the emblem of a moral conquest. There is here a grave love of paradox, a sublime spiritual humour, as if religion by its very might could set at naught all common laws. The religionist of this type—and all religion as it develops seems to show the character—thus sees the action of the universe as a divine comedy. The confidence which high religions usually have that the righteous order is, or is to be, triumphant is among the impressive things of human nature and of history.

Some of the many forms in which men represent to themselves a large or universal opposition have passed before us. We must at best confess our ignorance of much that surrounds and penetrates this sense of conflict. And yet in many ways the mystery can be lessened. The outer conflict is largely an outward projection of a discord and unrest within the mind, where desire fights with desire, and aim stands sharp against accomplishment. To trace something of the character of this conflict is the purpose of what follows ; and so there need be no thought as yet of explanation. The various expressions of the sense of discord are doubtless but the summing-up, in pictorial or intellectual form, of the endless oppositions to which reverence leads.

<sup>1</sup> *T'ao Teh King*, II, 43 (XXXIX, 87).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 38, 6 (XXXIX, 80 f.).



PART I

CONFLICTS IN REGARD TO FEELING  
AND EMOTION





## CHAPTER I

### APPRECIATION AND CONTEMPT OF SELF

MEN have so long been described as delighting in their own attainments, that literature often transmits this account as though it were an axiom. Self-depreciation has always seemed a pretence, and humility a mask, to some observers of mankind. But while many do habitually take an open or secret pleasure in themselves, there are minds of a different mould. For such, their own possessions—house or clothing, body, voice, opinions or intents—always seem inferior in quality and impressiveness to what is connected with the personality of others. For them, an object loses character at once when detached from their companions and associated with themselves. They obtain the exact counterpart of what they admired among the belongings of some chance acquaintance, and it soon seems poor and ineffectual. They constantly see themselves as less significant than men who in reality fall far short of them in power. The self-depreciating, the self-distrustful type is as real, if not as common, as the self-glorifying, the self-confident. And this difference appears in religion. Individuals and whole societies express, in one form or another, a chastened self-esteem and self-confidence, while others feel something like pity and misgiving for themselves and all their powers.

Yet in any well-developed religion it is customary to discriminate, and it is rare that a society or even an individual commends or condemns without reserve all that may be called the self. The feeling of satisfaction or of disapproval

is directed toward parts or potentialities of the self, rather than toward its unbroken mass. And yet the portion that is regarded with some approach to commendation and the part that is viewed with pain are often so proportioned that there results a dominant feeling which may readily be classed as pleasure or dislike. Illustrations of this divergence may be given.

There are religions, like that presented in the Zend-Avesta, which pass no condemnation on many of the fundamental instincts of the individual ; while there are others, notably of India, which find little or nothing in man that is worthy of respect, and in which the chief labour of the faithful is to kill their deepest natural powers. The Parsee could without shame pray for happiness and long life on earth, with wealth and many children, and for life after death. He was urged to cultivate his ordinary powers of intelligence, as well as those higher activities of intuition which more especially lead to the divine. The Buddhist also values knowledge, and much is said of developing higher powers. But intellect and all the other processes of thought are here forcibly limited and rendered blank, as in certain forms of the hypnotic trance ; and all thinking that has any definite object before it, or that is free and natural as in practical life, must be avoided by him who would attain the infinite rest. Not alone real thought, however, but affection and desire, especially all forms of the desire for individual existence,<sup>1</sup> are enemies of the Good. All particular and definite existence, all that man commonly calls *himself*, is felt as an intolerable burden, and Nirvana is the unspeakable peace of escape from a personal and individual life. "Untarnished by the desire of future life" is an expression that makes this temper clear.<sup>2</sup> All those questions and ideas that tend to impress one with his own importance or own stability are to be avoided. Unwise is it to ask, "Have I existed during the ages that are past, or have I not ? Shall I exist

<sup>1</sup> At least in much of the doctrine of southern Buddhism.

<sup>2</sup> Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, II, 9 (XI, 27). Rhys Davids's tr.

during the ages of the future, or shall I not ? ” And to get the notion that “ this soul of mine is permanent, lasting, eternal, and will continue for ever and ever ”—this is “ walking in delusion, the jungle of delusion, the wilderness of delusion, the writhing of delusion.”<sup>1</sup>

The contrast which is found between the spirit of much of Indian religion and that of ancient Persia is repeated within the limits of Christianity in its historic development. The life of Jesus, as well as his verbal doctrine, shows no insistence that men should sweep away their native inner endowment and bring entirely different impulses in their place. He declared, it is true, that there must be some deep change which might be described as a re-beginning of life, as a second birth. Yet the man born of the spirit was still to have affection and desire, was still to be discriminating and awake. There was to be sought a *change in the direction, or object*, of men's activities ; rather than their *extinction*. Men were to continue to desire, but to desire what was right. The self was not to be annihilated ; it was to be assigned its due importance ; we must not permit our personal impulses to outrank the will of God.

But in the historic development of Christianity there has been ample presentment of the opposite view. Life has been regarded as properly a study in self-effacement, in pouring contempt on all our native powers. Human intellect, or reason, has been declared to be utterly sterile, or productive of nothing but illusion ; the human will is powerless or perverse, the human affections vile. This doctrine of total depravity, whatever else it may be, is an intellectual form under which there masks itself a feeling of self-aborrence. The whole nature of man is corrupt and worthless ; it begins to have value only as there comes from without something to replace or vivify it.

But there are ideas other than that of total depravity that are supported or suppressed by the character of the feeling toward the self. The belief in predestination, and

<sup>1</sup> Sabbāsava Sutta, 9 ff. (XI, 298 f.) abbreviated.

the contrary conviction, of personal freedom and responsibility, would seem to have some of their springs in this same region—the doctrine of freedom issuing in part from the feeling of self-value, while the sense of degradation, of worthlessness, gives colour to the belief that all man's acts are fatally impelled by some power without. For there seems good reason to think that feeling, in all such cases, is the more primitive thing and contributes more to shaping doctrine than does pure logic and the intellect. Conviction comes largely in answer to feeling, rather than from the premisses which later are found to support it. Any too universal assertion, however, must be avoided. For the intellect is amazingly fertile in the inner life, and one would be rash who would say that doctrinal oppositions never spring directly from the fondness for denial as a purely dialectic play. Any belief whatever will usually find its opposite formulated sooner or later by mere intellectual contrariety, by mere 'association by dissimilarity.' Yet where such opposite doctrines do not remain airy cobwebs, but move men powerfully and become the rallying cries of parties, we may well expect to find something in the impulses and the affections that gives aid and comfort to each of the opposing views. The man who is utterly cast down, or the people that for ever finds itself between the hammer and the anvil, naturally inclines to believe that all things are accomplished by some higher power, some god or Fate. The contrary belief, that man has resident force to originate action, and may be held accountable for what he does, implies some consciousness of personal worth, a certain self-esteem. Whatever ennobles the individual in his own eyes works to convince him of freedom and responsibility, while we must also freely admit that such a conviction wonderfully reacts to heighten the valuation of the self.

Yet it is far easier to point out the influence exercised by such feelings than to say why this man is full of self-satisfaction and that one humble. It certainly does not depend on success or failure, as the world sees these things. A



homeless wanderer I recently met, who earned an occasional lodging and a meal, was blessed with a store of confidence and self-appreciation that would have fitted out a score of common men. The immense difference between a large portion of the people of Asia and a large group in Europe and America, in regard to the feeling of personal freedom, cannot be attributed to any lasting difference in the worldly prosperity of the two regions. And while differences in the tone of government may have fostered or repressed the sense of individual importance, yet it is doubtful whether the tone of government itself in the two cases has not been largely determined by a prevalent difference of self-regard in the two parts of the world.

Religion upon both sides of this great division, however, shows a strange characteristic which meets one at many turns—each side of the opposition repeats within, and upon a smaller scale, the very contrast which exists between itself and what stands without. Christianity, which presents in the main a tempered self-esteem, inclines, in some of its branches, to the strongest self-depreciation; and although it is essentially committed to the doctrine of personal freedom, yet it has not been without inclination toward the belief in the powerlessness of man. And this is true of Islam and of other religions of the East. The Koran is almost fearlessly consistent in its stress on predestination: it teaches that every act of every being is set down beforehand in the divine record. "No accident befalls in the earth, or in yourselves, but it was in the Book, before we created them; verily that is easy unto God."<sup>1</sup> And not only has God hung to each man's neck an augury which will be spread open for him at the resurrection day,<sup>2</sup> but "every nation has its appointed time, and when their appointed time comes they cannot keep it back an hour, nor can they bring it on."<sup>3</sup> As in the doctrine of some men nearer home, many of mankind as well as of the jinns

<sup>1</sup> Koran, LVII (IX, 269).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XVII (IX, 2 f.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VII (VI, 141).



are created beforehand for hell ;<sup>1</sup> nor can any person believe and be saved, except by divine permission.<sup>2</sup> And while the divine action is thus occasionally described, with reserve, as of mere permission, God is elsewhere represented as doing all that man thinks himself to do : “ Ye did not slay them,” men are told, regarding deeds in war, “ but it was God who slew them, nor didst thou shoot when thou didst shoot, but God did shoot.”<sup>3</sup> Yet theologians of Islam have represented with ardour the view, difficult to reconcile with the main teaching of the Koran, that the human will is free, and that evil must not be attributed to God.<sup>4</sup> Hindu thought, also, with all its stress on the endless chain of causes in which every human act is normally bound, has not been without its representatives of the opposite view, according to which the individual is responsible for his acts—as, among others, that Sâmkhya school of pluralists, who believe that there is salvation for the individual and that the soul is free when once it recognizes its own character and, by its look of recognition, breaks the bond between itself and Nature.<sup>5</sup> But the feeling of the Orient seems to lean more readily the other way. When the great god Krishna, disguised as a charioteer, instructs Arguna upon the field of battle, he says : “ Even without you the warriors standing in the adverse hosts shall all cease to be. All these have been already killed by me. Be only the instrument, O Savyasâkin ! Whom I have killed do you kill.”<sup>6</sup> Or, to take the telling words of the Chinese Chuang Tzŭ, we are but molten metal to be cast in whatever form God wills. “ Suppose that the boiling metal in a smelting-pot were to bubble up and say, ‘ Make of me an Excalibur ’ ; ” he writes, “ I think the caster would reject that metal as uncanny. And if a sinner like myself were to say to God, ‘ Make of me a man, make of me a man,’ I think he, too, would reject me as uncanny. The universe is the smelting-

<sup>1</sup> Koran, VII (VI, 160).    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, X (VI, 204).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII (VI, 165).    <sup>4</sup> Palmer: *Introd. to Qur'ân* (VI, p. lxxv.).

<sup>5</sup> Garbe : *Die Sâmkhya-Philosophie*, 1894, pp. 251, 323 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, XI (VIII, 96), w. omissions ; Trimbak Telang's tr.

pot, and God is the caster. I shall go whithersoever I am sent, to wake unconscious of the past, as a man wakes from a dreamless sleep.”<sup>1</sup> Contrast this with lines which have seemed to some in our part of the world to set forth a right feeling toward the universe and toward one’s self :

“It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishment the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate;  
I am the captain of my soul.”

This is equalled in temper only by Whitman’s rapt exclamation over himself, “Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the Son,” or by the diffident words of Thomas Davidson, “God is afraid of me.” It is youth opposed to age, modernness against antiquity, the extremely masculine against the feminine feeling of the relation of one’s powers to the larger world about.

Indeed, as for some it seems well to cultivate chiefly the feeling of nothingness, so for others a moderated self-reliance passes over into a kind of mania, or inflation, of the self. There are pious exercises in some lands just to quiet all thought of the insufficiency of the self. The devotee is at first to think that the Illimitable, the Immortal, is below, above, in west and east, in north and south, is the entire world. And then it follows that *I am below, above, in west and east, in north and south ; I am this entire world !*<sup>2</sup> Even were the self here no longer identified with the ‘empirical ego,’ there would still seem to be a kind of glorification of the common self-reliant mood.

It is characteristic of the feeling of dependence, on the other hand, that the Japanese Uchimura speaks of God as his Lord and *Husband*,<sup>3</sup> and finds great comfort in the doctrine of predestination. He writes : “June 3.—Studied the doctrine of Predestination, and was strongly impressed

<sup>1</sup> Chuang Tzŭ, tr. Giles, 1889, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Chândogya Up., VII, 23 ff., in Deussen’s tr. : *Sechsig Upanishad’s des Veda*, 1897, p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> *Diary of a Japanese Convert* [1895], p. 86.

with its import. Heart leaped with joy. Temptations seem to vanish away, and all the noble qualities of my mind burn with emotion. Where is fear, where is the power of the tempter, if I am one of God's chosen elects, predestinated for his heirship before the foundation of the world!"<sup>1</sup> Thus Calvinism is repellent only to those who, according to its doctrine, are foreordained to be repelled. It is a message of joy to the heart emotionally attuned to it. Nor need the joy come entirely from the thought that the person himself is elected to be eternally saved. A satisfaction almost as deep, although of a more sable colouring, apparently has filled men who believed that, for the glory of God, they were chosen to be for ever damned.

In thus surmising that the sense of freedom is somehow connected with self-appreciation, and necessitation with humility, a point has been reached where one may perhaps begin to see that these contrasting emotions influence not alone one's theory of the will or of personal efficiency; they are of importance also for the picture we make of human destiny after death. The opposition in the feelings we are considering tends to find expression in contrary doctrines regarding the future life. The sense of personal worth or worthlessness is reflected in the belief in immortality or in the final extinction at least of consciousness. A readiness to believe in ultimate extinction is a sign of self-depreciation; while the opposite feeling—that in some way this self of mine is treasured, is essential to the world—supports the idea that death is but a superficial experience, and that in spite of it the individual soul lives on. There are many contributing sources to the belief in the soul and in its continuance: the subtle coming and going of air from lips and nostrils; the pulsations of heart and arteries; the living images which come to the mind in sleep; shadows, reflections in water or in the pupil of the eye,<sup>2</sup> and doubtless

<sup>1</sup> *Diary*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Monseur: "L'ame pupilline," *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, LI (1905), p. 1; "L'ame poucet," *ibid.*, p. 361.

much beside, if one were to name only the influences among savage men. But that these suggestions of a life independent of the body and of death obtain from humanity such a ready and continued response must be due to some inner encouragement which they receive from feeling—from the interest and value which conscious existence itself has for most of us. That shadows and dreams and all the mechanism by which the belief in immortality is often explained are not of themselves the whole account, is clear from the fact that the belief in immortality may weaken or entirely disappear without noticeable loss of shadow or in the power of dreaming.

It will be best not to attempt to illustrate the innumerable forms of the belief in the spirit and in its life after death. We may let the idea of the Malay be for us a type of much of primitive thought. The soul for the Malay is about as large as the thumb, but otherwise it is a fair copy of the actual person, in form and in complexion. Yet it has not the physical solidity of the body, being filmy, shadowy, and possessed of power to flit and flash from place to place.<sup>1</sup> The natural man believes, too, in continuance after death. The shadow, or soul, of the Ojibwa follows a wide beaten path that leads to a country in the west. Beyond a deep and rapid water, his soul comes to a long lodge where it finds all his relatives for generations past, who with gladness welcome him to their land where is abundant game and pleasures of many kinds.<sup>2</sup>

And this belief in a continued life is developed feebly or with vigour in many of the great religions. The Mohammedan picture of celestial bliss is well known, where carpets of silk and gold, and gushing springs and luscious fruits and fair companions await the faithful; while eternal fire and hot water and filth are for the unbelievers.<sup>3</sup> In the character of the soul's life, as well as in the vividness with which it

<sup>1</sup> Skeat: *Malay Magic*, 1900, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft: *Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge*, 1860, II, 135.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 46 and 48 f.



was imagined, the Arab's faith here is in striking contrast to that of the ancient Hebrew, whose realm of Sheol provided only an existence vague and bloodless. More like the Arab's, but with less emphasis on the satisfaction or disappointment of eye and skin and palate, is the sharp imagery of the ancient Persian. The souls of dæva-worshippers and of the righteous must alike cross the fateful *Kinvað* Bridge, where a maid distinguishes the evil from the good. The spirits of the evil fall into the depths of the dark, horrid world of hell, while the good come to the presence of the heavenly gods, to an undecaying world, the golden seat of Ahura Mazda.<sup>1</sup> Or, according to another account, the blessed soul is met by his conscience, as a beauteous maid, and moving through fair-scented airs toward the south, reaches the three heavens—of thought, of word, and of deed—and passing through them enters the fourth heaven, of endless light. The wicked soul, conducted through stench unspeakable, is met by a foul hag, his conscience, and passes through the three hells, of thought, of word, and of deed, to the fourth hell, of endless gloom.<sup>2</sup>

The expectation of a definite personal continuance, of which the foregoing may serve for scanty illustration, stands opposed to the belief in final unconsciousness or absorption, and the desire for such an end. World-weariness, where nearly all impressions are felt as pain, has in some places caused life itself to seem a burden, and nothing is sought more earnestly than death, death without return of thought. It is in part a carrying out fully of that contempt of self which many religionists urge, but usually with a reservation. It is also perhaps a protest and reaction against the doctrine of endless rebirth, which rests like an obsession upon some minds. Better no life at all, many a Hindu must have felt, than be bound to the wheel that forever makes its round. The very limitlessness of this conception of the transmigrating soul, like the endless repetition

<sup>1</sup> *Zend-Avesta*, *Vendidad*, XIX, 29-32, 47 (IV, 212 ff., 218).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *Yast* XXII (XXIII, 314 ff.).



of the Buddhist worlds, each with its own heaven, its own hell—the pointlessness, the failure to give anything eminent upon which the eye may rest, helps to produce an intellectual vertigo and revulsion, and spiritual suicide seems the one thing wholly to be sought.

In communities where a machine-like round of life has not seemed part of personality, men have been far less inclined to feel that existence is an evil through and through. There is a core of experience—even my contemplation and love of the Ideal, if nothing else—which is felt to be worth saving, and to be a force which of itself does help to save. This feeling that I have something within which is eternally of worth, and which the universal power will protect and treasure, marks the young and hopeful type the world over. There is a fine spiritual egoism in the belief in immortality which goes well with the sense of present freedom, and with all those social and political expressions of personal importance so common in the West.

Even the belief in eternal damnation, which for the moment might seem a mark of degradation, is in reality an inverted utterance of the feeling of individual worth. Anyone must be important who calls for endless wrath. Though animals have often been subject to trial before the law, and though in primitive thought certain animals may be accursed or be objects of divine honour, yet no great religion, so far as I know, has given to the beasts the dignity of being, like men, the individual objects of unending heavenly retribution. Some have declared for animals in heaven, although perhaps more for man's sake than for the animals'. The world still awaits the preacher of their eternal damnation, much as their conduct at times suggests the thought.

There remains but one further illustration of the many forms in which the feeling of self-appreciation or of contempt here comes to light. The feeling with which man regards himself affects decidedly his view of the relation between himself and God. He who can see but little in the universe beside himself is apt to feel small need of other

worship. Whether there is or is not any direct connection between the two, the Buddhist's morbid absorption in the self, even in the very effort to escape the self, goes well with the strain of atheism in this religion. One of its most careful students has described Buddhism as "simply a system of earnest self-culture and self-control."<sup>1</sup> And this account seems well supported by the records. There is a confident reliance on one's own powers, a refusal to look to any other for help, that is saved from irreligion only by the elevation of its tone. "Therefore, O Ānanda, be ye lamps unto yourselves," says the Blessed One. "Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves."<sup>2</sup> The Master himself has had no teacher; he has reached the truth by himself alone: "Self-taught in this profoundest doctrine, I have arrived at superhuman wisdom. That which behoves the world to learn, but through the world no learner found, *I now myself and by myself* have learned throughout."<sup>3</sup> And in the passage which I am about to give, the glorying in the isolation of the self is the more striking since it is an account, not of Gotama's own enlightenment, but of his convert Subhadda's: "And e'er long he attained to that supreme goal of the higher life for the sake of which men go out from all and every household gain and comfort to become houseless wanderers—*yea, that supreme goal did he, by himself, and while yet in this visible world, bring himself to the knowledge of, and continue to realize, and to see face to face!* And he became conscious that birth was at an end, that the higher life had been fulfilled, that all that should be done had been accomplished, and that after this present life there would be no beyond."<sup>4</sup>

Among the same people in whom was found this moral

<sup>1</sup> Rhys Davids: *Buddhist Suttas*, p. 62, note.

<sup>2</sup> Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, II, 33 (XI, 38).

<sup>3</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, III, 15, 1205 f. (XIX, 169 f.), italics added.

<sup>4</sup> Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, V, 68 (XI, 110), italics added.

self-reliance that seeks no help from God, there appeared the very opposite type of religion—a religion which cannot discern any reality whatever or any efficacy in one's own efforts, but sees God as the sole form of all existence. "I am the self, O Gudâkesa ! seated in the heart of all beings," says Krishna. "I am the beginning and the middle and the end also of all beings. I am Vishnu among the Âdityas, the beaming sun among the shining bodies. I am Marîki among the Maruts. I am Indra among the gods. And I am mind among the senses. I am consciousness in living beings."<sup>1</sup> And again : "The Lord, O Arguna ! is seated in the region of the heart of all beings, turning round all beings as though mounted on a machine, by his delusion."<sup>2</sup>

But between these two extremes of religion—neither of which leaves any real inter-relation between man and God, since in each case one of the related terms has disappeared—there are many forms of faith. The thought that man, while not identical with the Almighty, is yet kindred to him, is darkly represented in the Koran. Adam not only has in him the breath of the Creator, as in Genesis, but God commands the angels to adore Adam, and "they adored him save only Iblîs, who refused and was too proud and became one of the misbelievers."<sup>3</sup> In Judaism, from which Mohammed drew so much, the separation between man and God was in some ways greater. For while man was created in the divine image, and in his nostrils was the very breath of God, yet his prime sin was to seek to know what was for the gods alone to know, and to aspire to become as the gods. In contrast with this, the reverent Parsees could pray that they might themselves become gods, might become Ahura Mazdas.<sup>4</sup> The Egyptian not merely prayed that he might become an Osiris ; he foresaw himself so exalted that the very gods did him homage.<sup>5</sup> With more

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, X (VIII, 88), shortened.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII (VIII, 129).

<sup>3</sup> Koran, II (VI, 5) ; cf. VII (VI, 138 f.), XV (VI, 246 f.), etc.

<sup>4</sup> Zend-Avesta, Gâthas, XXX, 9 (XXXI, 34), Mills's tr.

<sup>5</sup> Book of the Dead, 'The Judgment' (Budge, p. 30), and XI, 2 ; CLXIX, 26 f. ; CLXXII, 10 ; CXXXIII, 8 f. ; CLXXVIII, 15 ; etc.

sobriety, the link between the human and the divine is expressed by other peoples in other ways—as a relation of slave and master, or again, as that of child and father, or finally as the tie which binds friend to friend. The increasing elevation of the human side of this relation, from utter subjection until we have that approach to equality which goes with friendship, sets forth in the form of picture a change in the sense of individual worth. Yet feelings which correspond to all three of these images may exist in the same religion. In the New Testament occurs the designation, “Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ”; and in contrast to such an expression of lowliness is the Sonship of which Jesus himself so often spoke—a type of relation which other religions have used, but with less insistence and with a less central place. That the soul and its Ideal are related to each other as are friends is also caught by religious minds beyond the confines of Christendom. In the Zend-Avesta we find the prayer that helpful grace may be given, “as friend bestows on friend.”<sup>1</sup> And in the Rig-Veda, the hymns to Agni continually refer to him as the Friend of men, the god who dwells humbly at their very hearth. But in Christianity the tie between Jesus and his disciples, which he declares may typify the spirit which should exist between God and man, is even more pronouncedly made to be the attitude of friendship. Such a word now seems no longer a bit of imagery, but a sober attempt to express reality. “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends.”<sup>2</sup> This attempt to inspire the worshipper with the thought that he is not the bondsman but the free associate of divinity has not always, in the Christian Church, called forth a ready sympathy. Times have often come when men have been urged to an attitude toward God more like that of subjection to an autocrat. Yet the Founder’s thought that, not subjection, but sonship or friendship is desired, has unquestionably helped to school the sentiments.

<sup>1</sup> Gáthas, XLVI, 2 (XXXI, 135).

<sup>2</sup> John, XV, 15.



There has thus existed for the Christian community, partly because of this education, and perhaps partly because of some inherent affinity for the doctrine, a consciousness of self-value corresponding to the thought that man has in him something of the very nature of his God.

In regard to religious self-depreciation and esteem it may be said that the two terms often are conjoined ; both are constituents, in many cases, of the one experience. That eerie doubling of personality, which is so important a discovery in modern psychology, is but an extreme instance of what is common and natural with many religious minds. Often the devout man feels that he is no simple and single self ; his nature is dual and in conflict, and each of the contending forces within him has a kind of organization and selfhood of its own. " The good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " <sup>1</sup>

Now wherever there is this inner contest, different feelings greet the partial selves. The judicial, or imperial, self will normally love the one and hate the other ; rarely is there want of preference. A value is felt to inhere in one of the rivals, which is wanting to the other, and thus the person feels for himself both appreciation and contempt. Occasionally, however, the sense of utter defeat to all the higher impulses may leave nothing but humility or despair ; or, again, there may be such an absence of the doubling of personality, or such weakness to the conflict—perhaps because the lower impulses are so feeble or else so strong—that the man views himself with perfect acquiescence or with a feeling near to veneration. The singleness or complexity of the religious sentiment here depends upon the organization of the self, and there clearly is more than a single type. The complacent, self-gratulatory character, in religion as in common life, stands out sharp against

<sup>1</sup> Romans, VII, 19 f., 24.



the humble, self-depreciating form of personality. The two men who went up into the temple to pray are the lasting representatives of these opposite forms of character—the one thanking God for great advance in holiness, the other standing afar off and not so much as lifting up his eyes while asking mercy for his failures.

## CHAPTER II

### BREADTH AND NARROWNESS OF SYMPATHY

THE value which we have in our own eyes is bound intimately with our feelings toward our kind. And yet in no simple way ; for with some men, self-love and a disregard of their fellows are but the inner and the outer border of the same mental fact. With others, the appreciation of themselves first teaches them the worth of men ; while with still others, it is only from the rich attributes which they prize in their associates that they come to see themselves as having worth. One may thus have an opposite attitude toward his neighbour and toward himself, or there may be no such contrariety in the feelings with which he looks inward and without.

In passing from self-regard onward to the sympathies, we come closer to religion's citadel and life. For reverence is, by its very nature, a bond which unites man to powers which lie more central to the world. And this is true, not alone where there is good-will and confidence between divinities and men, but even where the suppliant is fearful and desires most of all to soften the anger of his gods. For anger, like love (though in an infinitely less degree), is a mark of recognition, and testifies to the presence of a mutual concern. But we are to attend now to the feelings which religion arouses or hopes to incite in its followers, not toward the unseen world itself, but toward men. And we shall find that, both in the person by himself and in the larger groups of men, religion sanctions and produces opposite results. The fruit at one time is love toward all men ; while again, sympathy is checked and chilled.

Extreme instances of the narrowing of fellow-feeling are found in those whose worship drives them into lasting solitude. The eremites, whose lonely existence in the wilderness religious history so often relates, cannot endure the society of men. All human intercourse is felt to be a hindrance to that true companionship for which they long. And since to them it seems that God alone is the worthy companion of the soul, they shake the dust of cities from their feet, and flee to him. In their far-off cave or forest fastness they find a freedom of the spirit from which the common ties of life would for ever cut them off.

A limitation of the social feelings after a like manner, but of less degree, is found where men betake themselves to some small company of kindred minds. The monastery, the house of nuns, gains its support in many ways ; but through all the motives which create it, whether in Christian or in Buddhist lands, there is the feeling that the common social ties are a fetter to the soul. There is a rejection of plain humanity with all its mundane interests and aims. The call to come out from among them may be heeded with the thought that the separation will help even those who are left behind ; that it will set a high example which will correct their inner life even where there can be no outward copying. Especially where the monks, as with the 'little brothers' of St. Francis, have been given to deeds of mercy outside the cloister walls, there has been no utter death of interest in men. But too often there is scant sympathy with the outer world ; the renunciation in the case of many is rather a flight from a life polluted, and the monastery is expected to bring freedom and rest, in contrast with the ways of common men, and especially with the distractions of the family. " Full of hindrances is household life, a path defiled by passion," says the Lord Gotama ; " free as the air is the life of him who has renounced all worldly things. How difficult is it for the man who dwells at home to live the higher life in all its fulness, in all its purity, in all its bright perfection ! Let me then cut off my hair and beard,

let me clothe myself in the orange-coloured robes, and let me go forth from a household life into the homeless state ! ”<sup>1</sup> In another mood, more given to strained reasoning, it is not so much the practical hindrances of the home which require one to leave it, as it is its failure to imitate the isolation of the god. Brahman is free from household cares, and the disciple must be like Him in freedom from household cares, if he would become united with Him.<sup>2</sup>

The feeling that only those of like faith and of like conduct are fit companions for the soul has doubtless existed in all religious bodies that have been smaller than the whole secular society and have had special tests for membership and special marks of separation, or distinction. Often, as among savage tribes, the religious and the civil society are of like extent. And yet frequently even here are secret organizations of a semi-religious strain, of which the associations called the Ndâ and Njembe (the latter a women’s club) among the negroes of Southern Guinea may serve as specific examples.<sup>3</sup> Doubtless such bodies, like ‘fraternities’ in college, or the Masonic order, heighten the sympathy between those who are fellow-members, and tend to lower it toward those without the pale. The social bond has here been given depth, but at the cost of breadth. Such an effect does perhaps sometimes come from membership in the visible church in Christendom. And yet this trend is met, and in many cases overcome, by reason of the ideal there existent to receive all men in fellowship.

In respect to the range of sympathy, Christianity might be contrasted with the religion of the Jews. In spite of the intolerance that has disgraced the disciples of the Nazarene, they have in general felt themselves more kindred to the rest of men and less a people set apart than have the Hebrews. The Jews have received aliens into their communion, but

<sup>1</sup> *Tevigga Sutta*, I, 47 (XI, 187 f.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 6 f. (XI, 202).

<sup>3</sup> Wilson: *Western Africa*, 1856, pp. 395 ff.; cf. Boas: “Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians,” Report of the National Museum for 1895 (publ. 1897), p. 311.

they seem never to have been marked by a burning desire to take others to their hearts. This peculiar defect of sympathy has been at the root of their estrangement from the Gentile world ; they have held aloof, and others have inevitably held back from them. This barrier which cannot be passed, even when there is a will on both sides to cheat the fates, has its deep element of pathos. But it is idle to believe that the isolation of the Jews is entirely a result of their rejection of the Gospel. The Romans hated the Jew long before any loyalty to the Christ could help to stir their feeling.

In tracing farther the forms in which the breadth or narrowness of sympathy is revealed, it would be well to distinguish love and pity. Love of others lies deep within the ideal, if not the constant practice, of Christianity. And it also lies deep in the faith of Buddha. The true disciple lets his mind pervade the four quarters of the world with thoughts of love. " And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of Love, far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure. Just, *Vâsettha*, as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard—and that without difficulty—in all the four directions ; even so of all things that have shape or life there is not one that he passes by or leaves aside, but regards them all with mind set free, and deep-felt love."<sup>1</sup> But in all this sympathy, sadness sounds its minor chord. The suffering of men—who, bound to the wheel of life, must even in the heaven of the gods endure a doom of sorrow—darkens all the view. Pity, rather than love, is here the recurrent note. For there is this difference between the two : that into the sympathy which goes with each, there is mingled in the one case high regard and joy, and in the other a sense of worth now lost, an element of tragedy.

The distinction is more than a mere nicety of language.

<sup>1</sup> *Tevigga Sutta*, III, 1 f. (XI, 201) ; cf. *Mahâ-Sudassana Sutta*, II, 8 (XI, 272 f.).



It is of practical moment, in that it indicates a difference of effect which religious sympathy may have on others, and helps to show the rank in which we place them and ourselves. Pity of the heathen, rather than love of the heathen, is what a Japanese observer, Uchimura, resented in the sermons he heard in America on the subject of foreign missions. On one occasion he and some of his countrymen spoke in another vein, praising the noble traits of the Japanese as a motive for Christian effort. But this, he tells us, was not received with approval: " ' If your people are so fine a set of people ' "—so he reports our brethren's comment—" ' why, there is no need of sending them missionaries. ' " " The fact is," he goes on to say, " if we heathen are but slightly better than gibbons or chimpanzees, the Christians may give up their mission works as total failures. It is because we know something of Right and Wrong, Truth and Falsehood, that we are readily brought to the cross of Christ. I sincerely believe that the Christian mission based upon no higher motive than ' pity for heathens ' may have its support entirely withdrawn without much detriment either to the sender or to the sent." <sup>1</sup>

But the work of the missionary, so easy to criticize and so delicate to perform, does yet in some measure indicate an interest in one's fellows that goes beyond the special people or the special faith to which one happens to belong. It is for the student, therefore, of peculiar value as an index to the range of social feeling. The missionary impulse is not confined to Christianity, although this religion has bridged wide gulfs in its effort to convert the world; it has carried its message with deliberate purpose to widely diverse races. In this respect it has almost from the beginning expressed the difference, to which I have already referred, between itself and that Judaism within which it began its life. The conviction of Paul that the Gospel was for all mankind—for Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, bond and free—did such violence to the feeling of his own

<sup>1</sup> *Diary of a Japanese Convert*, [1895], pp. 149 f.

people, that we need not wonder at the opposition he aroused, and at the narrow escape from an almost fatal schism in the early church. Paul's life is a telling instance of sympathy at first but limited, and then expanding until it could include the endlessly varied peoples to which his distant journeys took him. He was, among the disciples, the first to show in his own person the immense difference between religious exclusiveness and an insight into the eternal worth of men.

But the value which human society has for the religious mind is shown in other ways than by its attitude toward missions. The form which the future life assumes to the eye of faith has already been referred to as a sign of one's feeling toward one's self. But it is more than this; it is an index to the character of the feeling toward one's fellows. When the picture of the far-off divine event is but faintly suggestive of any continuance of a true human society, it must seem that he who draws the picture does not feel that an association with men is part of the very texture of the spiritual life. A people for whom the ideal world is not ideal unless there be in it warm human comradeship, will soon or late trace the outline of such a thought upon the heavens.

The Sheol of the Jews gives the picture of a life in which there is little consolation from the presence of other men. It is at times regarded as a state of complete, or almost complete, unconsciousness: "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol whither thou goest."<sup>1</sup> But where, in another vein, the land of death is one of life and thought, the kings and counsellors of the earth who are there regard themselves with pity. They greet the one who comes, with the words: "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?"<sup>2</sup> Much of the religious imagery of India, while showing a sad cheer in many ways, is also far from social. The wished-for end is either an absolute passing away, or else is identity

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes, IX, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah, XIV, 10.

with God. The silence with regard to the presence of one's fellows, in the thought of bliss, is but a carrying out in the eternal realm of that attitude of mind which leads to solitude and hermitage here on earth. "Once more listen to my excellent words, most mysterious of all," says the god to Arguna; "Strongly I like you, therefore I will declare what is for your welfare. On me place your mind, become my devotee, sacrifice to me, reverence me, you will certainly come to me. I declare to you truly, you are dear to me. Forsaking all duties, come to me as your sole refuge. I will release you from all sins. Be not grieved."<sup>1</sup> The consolation is here made to be an intimate life with God, with no perfecting of one's relations with his fellows. In so far then, all religion that is so exclusively theistic in its interest has in it a tincture of unmorality. And if one's absorption in the Ideal thus leaves no thought of men, it is but a further step to the point where it leaves no thought even of God, and one's consolation is sought in no association whatever, but solely in the self. The human heart in Vishnuism, as given in the statement just above, is not inconsolable if shut off eternally from intercourse with other human souls. The human heart in Buddhism is not inconsolable even though shut off eternally from God. The desire to enter the company of the Thirty-Three, and even of Brahman, is regarded as but a mark of imperfection.

In other religions we have the very opposite feeling for society. The Greek, in his picture of the Elysian fields, made the happiness of the blest to consist largely in the free intercourse of men, in the conversation so dear to the Greek. In this respect it had its likeness to the Teutonic idea of bliss, where in Valhalla there is an inconsumable plenty of boar's flesh and mead, but (best of all) stout friction with one's kind in a daily battle.<sup>2</sup> Stevenson's droll notion of heaven as a place where we could all, at last, be

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgītā, XVIII (VIII, 129).

<sup>2</sup> Edda "Gylfaginning," §§ 38 ff. (in Simrock: *Die Edda*, 1878, pp. 273 ff.).

pirates, was no less dependent on humanity for its joy. So, too, the Paradise of Islam, although making prominent the physical luxury of the saved, does not quite overlook their pleasure in human companionship. Besides the celestial gardens in which rivers flow—rivers of pure water and milk and honey and wine (wine that brings neither headache nor drunkenness !), with gushing springs and the cool shade of trees laden with luscious fruit, and golden bracelets and green robes of silk and of brocade—in addition to such dream-desires of the trader and the parched desert-caravan—there was a recognition of companionship that did not stop with large-eyed maids ; all ill-will was to disappear, and as brethren the blessed were to lie on couches face to face.<sup>1</sup> Into the gardens of Eden the faithful are to enter “with the righteous among the fathers and their wives and their seed ; and the angels shall enter in unto them from every gate : ‘Peace be unto you ! for that ye were patient ; and goodly is the recompense of the abode.’ ”<sup>2</sup> And even in their joy, their thought still goes back to those on earth : “Count not those who are killed in the way of God as dead,” commands the Prophet, “but living with their Lord—provided for, rejoicing in what God has brought them of His grace, and being glad for those who have not reached them yet—those left behind.”<sup>3</sup> The Mohammedan paradise thus confirms the tie between man and God, and between man and at least his own kin.

The hold of human as well as divine companionship upon the affections is no less clearly shown in Christianity, in its picture of Heaven. The ‘Revelation of St. John’ makes

<sup>1</sup> *Koran, passim* ; see esp. chs. LV, XLVII, XXXV.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII (VI, 235). This passage and the accompanying citations from the *Koran* seem hardly compatible with a recent statement by the Earl of Cromer (*Modern Egypt*, 1908, II, 145). After saying that the Christian has the hope of meeting in heaven those with whom he has been associated in this world, he adds : “The Moslem’s belief in immortality is dissociated from any ideas of this nature.” Quite apart from this, it might be said that the ancient Egyptian looked forward to some kind of relation with his kin after death. See *Book of the Dead*, XCVIII, 10 f. ; LII, 6 f. ; LXV, 2 f. ; CI, rubric ; CX, 39, and the vignettes : CLXXXIX, 7 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III (VI, 67).



the perfect condition of man an idealized city-life : a new Jerusalem descending from the heavens becomes typical of the glories of the redeemed. The relation of the solitary soul to God does not so fill the mind that nothing else finds place or value. The Church, the great body of men united in the one faith, is the Bride of Christ ; and there is consequently a union of the divine with human society. For the main body of Christians, the true religious relation has ever since remained a tie not alone of the worshipper to the divinity, but of human beings as well to one another. The ' City of God ' was the great figure used by Augustine, and the Church of Rome has repeatedly deterred men from the hope of salvation except as they remained in communion and communication with the spiritual society of men. Even the mystics, in whom social feeling is apt to be weak, cannot in Christianity well escape the strong humanistic trend. The Monk of Evesham saw heaven as a vast concourse of redeemed men and of angels.<sup>1</sup> And in the imagery of Swedenborg, the presence of that eternal Sun which gives its light and heat to all the heavens is no more real than is the association of men with one another in the spiritual world. Spirits depend on one another for their intelligence and power of speech. There was a certain spirit, we are told, who believed, as many men do, " that he thought from himself, thus without any extension out of himself and communication thereby with societies which are without him. That he might know that he was in a false persuasion, communication with neighbouring societies was taken away from him ; whereby he was not only deprived of thought, but also fell down as if dead, yet tossed about his arms as a new-born infant ; after a while the communication was restored to him, and, by degrees, as it was restored, he returned into the state of his own thought."<sup>2</sup> No modern psychologist with his insistence on imitation and the social

<sup>1</sup> *The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham*, 1196, ed. Arber, 1895, pp. 107 ff. Fra Angelico's pictures of the heavenly company will suggest themselves to everybody's mind.

<sup>2</sup> Swedenborg : *Heaven and the World of Spirits, and Hell*, § 203.

consciousness could give stronger expression to the mind's dependence on society.

It is perhaps true that the degree of sympathy which prevails in a religious body influences also the idea of future punishment. Those who consign a large portion of their fellow-men to endless torment would seem to be less regardful or appreciative of them than are those who see all creatures on their way to bliss. There unquestionably are other motives as well—the sense of wrong and of needed retribution. But a primary heartlessness in many men makes them take a kind of pleasure in witnessing or imagining pain in others. The cold interest of children in the suffering of a playmate, the rush of the street to look upon an injury to life or limb, have possibly some distant connection with the rank growth of the idea of hell's torment. With early peoples it is often developed far in excess of the notion of future joy. In the *Kalevala* there are elaborate accounts of the dark Kingdom of Tuoni :

“ There, the home of all the wicked,  
There the couch of the unworthy,  
There the chambers of the guilty.  
Underneath Manala's fire-rock  
Are their ever-flaming couches,  
For their pillows hissing serpents,  
Vipers green their writhing covers,  
For their drink the blood of adders.”<sup>1</sup>

But there is a bare mention of the Islands of the Blest.<sup>2</sup> And in the Koran, more of real and ingenious imagination seems to have been expended upon the tortures of the damned than upon the delights of those in Paradise. The wicked are to have only the foul thorn to eat,<sup>3</sup> or the fruit of the bitter tree *Ez Zaqqûm* : “ Verily it is a tree that comes forth from the bottom of hell ; its spathe is as it were the heads of devils ; verily, they shall eat therefrom, and fill their bellies therefrom. Then shall they have upon

<sup>1</sup> *Kalevala*, Rune XVI (Crawford, 238).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Rune XXIX (Crawford, 478).

<sup>3</sup> Koran, LXXXVIII (IX, 329).

it a mixture of boiling water "<sup>1</sup>—boiling water of which they shall drink as drinks the thirsty camel; water like molten brass that shall rend their bowels asunder. In sheets of fire they shall broil—fire for which the sinner's own wife shall bring the faggots;<sup>2</sup> and " whenever their skins are well done, then we will change them for other skins, that they may taste the torment."<sup>3</sup> With these and other devices that even an unsqueamish reader would rather not have set down, the unbelievers will spend eternity. Into Hell the damned shall pour by seven gates, they and the hosts of Iblis all together.<sup>4</sup> And they shall cry to Mâlik, the keeper of Hell, " ' O Mâlik! let thy lord make an end of us ' ; and he shall say, ' Verily, ye are to tarry here. ' "<sup>5</sup>

As I have said before, the sense of justice is only in part the motive for such imaginings of hell.<sup>6</sup> The moral sense is here stoutly seconded by the cruel fascination of suffering, by the primitive instinct for torture. Nor is this incompatible with strong bands of attachment; indeed where sympathy toward some is strongest, there is often found the most violent antipathy toward others, as highest tides bring lowest ebbs.

But with the growth of humane sentiment there is, sooner or later, a revulsion from the worst features of such a view of punishment, and the duration if not the intensity of the agony is diminished. Mohammed himself saw a sect turn away from his teaching, saying, " the fire shall not touch us save for a certain number of days."<sup>7</sup> The Mahayanist division of the Buddhists believe that men more in number than the sands of sixty Ganges rivers—believe, indeed, that all creatures are destined to be Bodhisattvas, destined to tread the path that leads to the blessed peace<sup>8</sup>—a judgment which seems the bolder when we think of the barriers of caste through which it breaks. In Christianity,

<sup>1</sup> Koran, XXXVII (IX, 170).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, CXI (IX, 344).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IV (VI, 80).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XV, XXVI, XXXII (VI, 247; IX, 94, 136).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, XLIII (IX, 217).

<sup>6</sup> See p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Koran, III (VI, 49).

<sup>8</sup> Saddharma-Pundarika, tr. Kern, XIV, XV (XXI, 281 ff., 303).

too, the universalists are more numerous than the special body that gives itself that name. And even among those who would hardly formulate their belief as favouring the salvation of all, there is a growing hesitation in affirming a positive belief in eternal punishment. This change in the informal, or unofficial, creed of Christendom may well be due in part to the growing sense of kinship with men of different nationalities and different religious faiths. We admire the capacity of the Japanese ; we send aid to sufferers in China or Chile or Russia. Where such a feeling grows, it is but natural that men should be less ready to pass eternal condemnation. It goes with the gradual narrowing of the occasions for capital punishment by statute law. Where mere indifference does not seem to be at the root ; where it is clear that the moral sense is as keen as ever ; the decline of the belief in eternal damnation may be counted a sign of an enlargement of the mutual regard of men.

It seems strange that the strong social features of Christianity should not have prevented its Protestant branch from taking the stand it has on another matter connected with the future life, namely a closer connection between the living and the dead. Prayers for the dead, so congenial to Catholicism, are in keeping with its genius for large grouping, for overpassing immense diversities of blood and colour and social condition. But for both the dead and the living to be still within the one Church, and still subject to like restraints and like dispensations of the one organization—this does not tone in so well with the greater individualism of the Protestant. His is a more solitary faith, and inclines to separate him, not alone from those who have tasted death, but even from the living. But there is an unchilled minority whose feeling is expressed by the kindly Sir Thomas Browne when he speaks of that third heresy “ which I did never positively maintain or practise, but have often wished it had been consonant to Truth, and not offensive to my Religion, and that is,



the Prayer for the Dead." Here speaks the more primitive impulse, and the Catholic Church has but maintained unchanged some of that feeling which inspired the older Rome, when it believed that the spirits of ancestors were closely bound in all that pertained to piety. In this, Rome was like Athens, like India, like China, and all the great company of peoples who believe that death does not end nor essentially weaken the family tie. The Siamese, the Japanese, welcome with ceremony the departed spirits who return to visit them. Men of Fiji, of Celebes, of Luzon, and of many other lands make offerings of the first fruits to the spirits of the dead, or express in other ways the sense of their intimacy.<sup>1</sup> While fear or self-interest often enters into such solemnities, yet in many cases there is evidence of filial attachment and a desire to benefit the dead. A reason given by Arguna for stopping fraternal strife and battle is, that ancestors are dependent on the living, and if the family by quarrelling cuts itself off, the proper rites for the dead cease and the forefathers then fall down to hell. The cult of ancestors is here thought of as of benefit chiefly to them, rather than to the living.<sup>2</sup>

The strong humanism of the ancient Persians' faith is shown by their making the spirits of men the final restorers of plenty and righteousness on earth. They looked to one man in particular, a son of Zarathustra, to be born in the distant future and to upbuild the fallen world. He is to be the great Saoshyant, the Beneficent One; but all the faithful among the dead are, in their own degree, like him and are called Saoshyants, allies of the Benefactor. And even the present maintenance of the world is due to the watchfulness of these human spirits. The faithful souls of the men of all nations maintain the sky, the water, the earth, the cattle, the child in the womb.<sup>3</sup> That charge

<sup>1</sup> Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, II, 460 ff.; III, 85 ff.; Tylor: *Primitive Culture*, 1903, II, 31 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Bhagavadgītā, I (VIII, 41).

<sup>3</sup> Zend-Avesta, Farvardin Yast, I, 17; II, 21 f.; Srōsh Yast Hād-hōkht, V, 22 (XXIII, 184, 185, 167; note p. 271).

which in the Hebrew hymn is committed to the angels to watch over men, and bear them up lest they dash their foot against a stone,<sup>1</sup> is here assigned unambiguously to spirits who once were men. These sustain both animate and inanimate creation, thus bearing constant witness that men are worthy of having entrusted to them some of the responsibilities of gods. The fire of human fellowship gleams from the other world to this, and adds its kindly light.

But these are not the only indications of a difference of sympathy in religion. The very size of the sect, where sects exist, is an evidence—though not to be used with mathematical precision—of the strength or weakness of the human bond. No sect, and indeed no religious body, could well become large without the beginnings of some catholic impulsions. The Parsee was not limited in his religious appreciation to those of his own blood or to his political friends. Even among the foe, even among the kith and tribes of the Turanian, he believed that piety was to be found; and thither, as well as to the saints of his own people, the Aryan looked with reverence. “We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Aryan countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Turanian countries,” declares the ritual song.<sup>2</sup> With a spirit like this to breast the current of native suspicion toward those of another blood, it is possible, unless something else hinders, for a creed to press on to foreign lands. Buddhism, with its sorrow for all men and all things that must endure the weight of life, is by this sympathetic pity well fitted to spread among people who are already given to such sombre thoughts. It is also in keeping with Islam’s wide sway, although perhaps not the major part of the cause of this, that at the very beginning the Prophet feels a mission that is not confined even to men. The jinns of the spirit world

<sup>1</sup> Psalm XCI, 11 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Zend-Avesta, Gâthas, XLVI, 12 (XXXI, 141); Farvardin Yast, XXX, 143 (XXIII, 226) condensed.

are seen to listen to the Koran, and many become faithful Muslims.<sup>1</sup> And Mohammed feels that his own prophetic office is the true succession and fulfilment of the work of the prophets of Judaism and Christianity.

Among the sects of Christendom, the Roman Church, by its breadth of sympathy for rich as well as poor, for the learned and the ignorant, by its feeling that it is not of this or that particular nation, has been effective in many lands. It has, judged in the large, been catholic in sentiment, as well as in name. Especially if we look to the sects in America (the great field for freedom of religious association), we find the largest numbers in the Catholic and the Methodist churches, the churches in which there has undoubtedly been in large measure an earnest and active appreciation of plain and common humanity. In contrast with these, stand the reserved and uncordial sects which have issued from the frozen loins of the New England Puritans. The Congregational churches, both Trinitarian and Unitarian, for all the service they give of light, if not of warmth, seem destined to include but few—largely because deep in their hearts they care for smaller groups and more select spiritual friendship. But in a land where, for so many, bigness is the one thing needful, let us greet with joy anything that willingly remains small.

It is not far from the topic of sects and the size of the communion to that of religious jealousy and toleration. Some religions permit their adherents no liberty of partaking in other faiths; there must be a definite, an exclusive choice and fealty. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are of this kind. If one profess Christianity, he is understood to renounce other religions; and this is true of the Hebrew and the Arab. On the contrary, Buddhist and Brahmin, in spite of an occasional bitter word—as when Gotama calls the three-fold wisdom of the Vedas a waterless desert, a pathless jungle<sup>2</sup>—have been tolerant

<sup>1</sup> Koran, LXXII (IX, 304).

<sup>2</sup> Teviggā Sutta, I, 39 (XI, 185).

and even sympathetic toward each other.<sup>1</sup> At the village of Shabatzgari, north-east of Peshawar, is a rock inscription said to be the edict of the Emperor Asoka, in the year 256 B.C., that "a man must not do reverence to his own sect by disparaging that of another man for trivial reasons. Depreciation should be for adequate reasons only, because the sects of other people deserve reverence for one reason or another. By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people. For he who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging all other sects, from a feeling of attachment to his own, on the supposition that he thus glorifies his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts severe injury on his own sect."<sup>2</sup> And in China, Buddhism, Tâoism, and the religion of Confucius live side by side in amity; one does not have to choose, but may take part freely in the ceremonies of all<sup>3</sup>—much as in Japan the peasant enters Buddhist temple and Shinto shrine with the same reverence and the same muttered words.<sup>4</sup> In Greece and Rome there was also toleration; the gods of foreign peoples were admitted to divine honours,<sup>5</sup> somewhat as the various tribes of Arabia, before the coming of Islam, had their diverse gods all at the Kaabah at Mecca.

Now while religious jealousy and even persecution have not been entirely wanting from other religions—for the Chinese have persecuted Buddhists, and the Buddhists have had open quarrels among themselves; while even Greeks and Romans have inflicted death, from a mixture of religious and political motives—yet it is the three great monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedism, that have been most bitter toward their rivals. Christians have used the faggot and the rack not only

<sup>1</sup> de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 622.

<sup>2</sup> Kosui Otani: "Japanese Pilgrimage to the Buddhist Holy Land," *Century Magazine*, Oct., 1906, N.S., Vol. L, pp. 869 f., condensed.

<sup>3</sup> de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 374.

<sup>4</sup> Knox: *Development of Religion in Japan*, 1907, pp. 92 f.

<sup>5</sup> Wissova: *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 1902, pp. 38 ff.; cf. Campbell: *Religion in Greek Literature*, 1898, p. 368.



against Jew and Turk and Moor, but even against dissenters within their own religion. The Jews sought out the early followers of the Christ, as in earlier times they had put to death the worshippers of Baal.<sup>1</sup> And the free use of the scimitar as a means of religious prophecy has been one of the causes of the wonderful spread of Islam. Yet the Koran, with all its fierceness against the opponents of Mohammed, has its appreciation of those who are not under his immediate banner. "Every nation has its apostle; and when their apostle comes to them, it is decided between them with justice, and they are not wronged."<sup>2</sup> "Verily, those who believe and those who are Jews, and the Sabæans, and the Christians, whosoever believes in God and the last day, and does what is right, there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve."<sup>3</sup> Yet the personal conduct of Mohammed toward that Jewish tribe which left his side was anything but clement: he marched against them, and having compelled them to surrender, sold the women and children to the Bedawin and beheaded 800 men!<sup>4</sup> And the more constant call in the Koran is to give battle to those who oppose the cause: "Kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drive you out; for sedition is worse than slaughter. Kill them, for such is the recompense of those who misbelieve."<sup>5</sup> "If they retire not from you, nor offer you peace, nor restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wheresoever ye find them."<sup>6</sup>

The motives for religious persecution are manifold. Often there is a desire to destroy the enemies of God, and thus to do him service by fighting his battles for him. There is often the will to spread the truth by requiring men to accept it under pain of instant death. And mingled with incentives such as these, there have too frequently been political and selfish ends masking in religion's garb.

<sup>1</sup> Judges, VI, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Koran, X (VI, 198).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, V (VI, 107); cf. II (VI, 8).

<sup>4</sup> Palmer: *Introd. to Qur'ân* (VI, p. xxxix).

<sup>5</sup> Koran, II (VI, 27), w. omiss.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, IV (VI, 85).

As the ingenious contrivance of tortures for the damned has given an imaginative satisfaction to the savagery of some, so the persecution of heretics and infidels has, under a religious gloss, sometimes physically gratified what was nothing but a wolfish thirst for blood. Toleration, on the other hand, may come from sheer listlessness, or from a purely intellectual disapproval of the effort to spread truth by fear and force, or it may arise from a real breadth of sympathy—from the feeling that a man's a man for all his want or waywardness of faith.

But the great monotheistic religions have a heightened motive to hate and destroy their rivals. Their God brooks no other gods, and therefore it is impossible to tolerate, in ordinary logical consistency, the worship of other beings. Persecution is here a crude attempt to put down a system that seems absolutely incompatible with the truth. With polytheism it is far different. Man is here nursed in the thought that the spiritual world itself is a realm where there exists among the gods mutual accommodation. The highest heavens are populous ; and while Athene receives praise from men, she must see others bring gifts to Apollo. The Maruts must grow accustomed to have their votary turn from them to sing a hymn to Agni. After such a schooling for the religious mind, there seems no serious difficulty in admitting other objects of reverence, if men are still unsatisfied. The pantheon is already large, and has always room for more. When men of such a faith permit others to worship freely the gods of their own choice, they are but imitating in some measure the divine nature itself, as they see it. Polytheism thus has in its bone and sinew the elements of toleration. The Mohammedan, the most insistent upon the divine unity—making it full half his creed—has been the most fanatical of all persecutors.

Religion has thus engendered hatred as well as love ; it has brought peace and also the sword. Some writers have dwelt almost entirely on its antagonisms, on its want of charity for those who differ from its ways. But its disin-

tegrating force is certainly no more real than its power to strengthen social ties. Religion, like other human interests, has had both the loss and the gain that come of organization. It is not difficult to appreciate the value of organization for the spread and maintenance of religious aims. Only very few men can keep their fire for spiritual things (or indeed for any other end) glowing and alive in solitude. They need the visible proof that others are with them; they need tradition, they need direction; the past and the present must come to their help in the form of institutions. And wherever it has been of moment to maintain an institution, it has been at a cost of enmity and even bloodshed. The great forms of social union have each a fearful debit beside the good they bring. The family, which binds husband and wife, brother and brother, parent and child, has produced an amount of misery that is only exceeded by its benefits to mankind. The pledge of a man and a woman to cleave to each other, has, as our later novelists and poets will not let us forget, often stood in the way of true association; and where its limitations have been disregarded, society has visited transgression with the gravest penalties. Moreover, the desire to aggrandize the family has made men betray all manner of trusts. Rivalry here has brought endless hatred and feud and vengeance. Yet only hot-heads would say that the family has made for hostility rather than for love. And likewise of the political institution. When one stops to consider how men have been plotters and thieves and assassins for the sake of government; how exigencies of state have turned brother against brother, and father against son; how men have gladly thrown aside for their sovereign's sake their last shred of private honour, and have gathered by hosts to drive out one another's souls with steel and lead—when one counts the cost of suffering and of physical and moral death at which the state has been maintained, he can hardly wonder at those who are for anarchy and who would stamp out patriotic zeal as the greatest curse that has ever come upon

the earth. This is the black history of an institution which is essentially for peace and order, and upon whose stability depend the opportunity and means for nearly all the virtuous relations. The very greatest human expression of fellowship has thus been the greatest occasion of discord. In view of what these other institutions have cost, it is no anomaly, although it is no less to be condemned, that man's loyalty to his faith and to his religious affiliations should have had its side of conflict and ill-will. But as the family becomes less and less an incentive to wrong, and as the state is very slowly learning to maintain itself without so staggering a moral outlay, so the church is gradually finding the means of preserving its own integrity without that bitterness which has marked its earlier life.

We have had in view some of the outward expressions of religion that are connected with man's feelings for his kind. The solitary and the monastic life, or the continuance of the ordinary social ties ; the formation of more inclusive or of more select religious associations ; the eagerness to carry the truth to foreign lands, and the confinement of a people's ministrations to kindred and friends ; the picture of the future life as including or neglecting human fellowship ; the ferocity or the softening of spiritual retribution, and the thought that all will come to God ; the close or broken bond with men who now are dead ; the spirit of tolerance or of persecution—these point to an opposition of forces in the religious consciousness. There is a limiting, a caste spirit both in primitive and in more advanced religions ; and in contrast with this, an expansive, outflowing, democratic spirit, typified by those occasions where all class distinctions are for a time obliterated, as in the revels at Rome, or in the great festivals of Krishna or of Holi in India, in which all grades of people meet on common ground.<sup>1</sup>

If now we were to seek an explanation of these opposing

<sup>1</sup> Oman : *Brahmans, Theists, and Muslims of India*, 1907, pp. 241 ff. ; cf. de la Saussaye : *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 652.



tendencies, we should find the causes partly within the nature of religion itself. The adoration of the Perfect, whether more clearly or dimly seen, becomes naturally, it would appear, both a bond and a barrier between men. It may tend to such absorption in another realm, that all irruption of plain human duty seems an affront to the higher life. Especially in mysticism is there a temptation to forget or to resent the presence of one's fellows, because the reality of the spirit makes so sovereign a claim upon the attention. The common man, busied with eating and drinking, with house and home, seems a blind lover of the bad, unworthy to be vouchsafed the heavenly vision, or else too sodden to be aroused by it. Yet apart from any feeling of superiority, great experiences may quiet for a while all need of intercourse, as when climbers on a mountain peak at sunrise involuntarily draw apart and look in silence. Often too, with an interest in perfection, there is an intense interest in one's own spiritual states, whereby the inner life is for ever being questioned and examined ; this leads likewise to a neglect of social ties.

But the contemplation of the ideal, for all its tendency to separate man from his fellows in whom it is so easy to see much that is unideal, does also tend to draw him back to them. For when we view our life and that of others as best we can from the standpoint of eternity, toward which the ideal soon carries us, the differences of race and rank, of wealth and culture, which loom so large from earthly levels, now seem petty and soon to pass away. And since, with all our selfishness, there is a wide atmosphere of goodwill which mankind in its best moments recognizes as its breath and life, the commands of heaven soon charge men in most solemn manner to guard and increase this goodwill. The normal man who has advanced from savagery finds his religion sanction his morality, morality which is nothing but regard for others and co-operation with them. By making men feel that the impulse to acknowledge rights in others, to work with them and to further their welfare,

is the will of heaven, religion is one of the great agents of human union. It begins with whatever is dominant in us—self-interest or fear, if generous impulses are still in infancy—and compels us to recognize through even these a larger unseen society. And as time goes on and sympathy widens its circle on earth, it is seen to exist among the gods, and from them returns to ennoble the intercourse of men, until religion is felt to be a friendship with the highest, and human friendship is a symbol and a portion of religion. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, if we lacked for evidence, would show how close religion is to the honour of a friend. Throughout history, human sympathy has been a source of revelation, and religion has helped men to feel their common blood.

But along with the love of love, there goes the hate of hate. The first form of the battle against suffering and against the maiming and stunting of one man by another is a personal assault upon those from whom such wrongs appear to arise. Gentler means of correction may come later ; but, for a time, society seems to need an abhorrence of those who represent the bad. Human nature is thus provided with antagonism and sympathy, and finds ample use for both. And if there are so many uses for hostility and kindness in common social life, it is natural that these should continue when the circle of companionship widens to include an unseen world. Thus the narrowing and widening of sympathy in religion appear to come partly from the varying development of these different elements of the moral life.

These opposing tendencies are near neighbours to another contrast found in every mind. The right growth of men requires that each must be imitative and each must be original. If we were not to pattern our acts on others, there would be poor progress ; this could come only from what was transmitted through the body, eked out by the little that the individual could discover for himself. Without imitation there would be no heirship to the wealth of custom and language, thought and sentiment, which we enter into by intercourse with men. But if all imitated only,

and did not also act to some extent originally, each under a flag of independence, there would be no increase of the common heritage. No one could contribute to the general good from the fresh store which each possesses.

Now imitation fosters and is fostered by the kindlier feelings. We readily copy where we sympathize. Originality, however, goes with mild antagonism, with some severing of the social bond. The enlarger of life must assert himself against, even when it is for, his kind. And here religion is of a like quality with purely secular progress. The leaders of religion have been strong to demolish, as well as to build up. The attempt to live according to a higher rule requires both the power to imitate, to appreciate others, and the power to live alone. Reverence for the ideal thus has hidden in it the element of harmony with men and the element of discord.

In this way it is perhaps already clear that the religious life and its oppositions are but the appearance of conflicting tendencies which run through human character. The gregarious trend and the instinct for isolation are evident in ordinary life. The Greek had his fine scorn for the world not Greek. The Athenian, the Spartan, each had something of this same feeling for Greece outside his little state. The Egyptians, Herodotus tells us, despised the Greeks—a feeling which, we well know, the Jews had for the uncircumcized about them. The Roman with all his pride of citizenship, was better able than any of these to enter into the life of other people; this was in part the cause, in part the fruit, of wide political successes.

But perhaps the best instances of wide and of narrow sympathy, analogous to the religious, while yet purely secular in tone, are found in the life of individuals. The whole-hearted lover of his kind, the man able to feel the kindred blood in himself and other men, whatever their colour or place or mode of thought, might be represented by Stevenson—drinking deep of the wine of fellowship, whether with the cultivated of Edinburgh, or with emi-

grants bound for California, or with the natives of Samoa. The opposite type may be seen in Thoreau. "I sometimes reproach myself," he writes in his journal, "because I do not find anything attractive in certain mere trivial employments of men—that I skip men so commonly and their affairs—the professions and the trades—do not elevate them at least in my thought and get some material for poetry out of them directly. Why not see men standing in the sun and casting a shadow, even as trees? May not some light be reflected from them as from the stems of trees? I will try to enjoy them as animals, at least. They are perhaps better animals than men." And again: "After having been perambulating the bounds of the town all the week, and dealing with the most commonplace and worldly-minded men, and emphatically *trivial* things, I feel as if I had committed suicide in a sense. A fatal coarseness is the result of mixing in the trivial affairs of men. Though I have been associating even with the *select* men of this and the surrounding towns, I feel inexpressibly begrimed. My Pegasus has lost his wings; he has turned a reptile and gone on his belly. Such things are compatible only with a cheap and superficial life."<sup>1</sup>

This is the very feeling which in religion leads to hermitage or the monastery. But among those who love Nature and despise men, the human antipathy is backed by an æsthetic or intellectual yearning for the perfect; while in the religious anchorite the support comes from the moral sense: a life is sought that will shock less the love of purity. The sensitiveness both to beauty and to holiness is indeed often at the price of human feeling. And this explains why men of perception are frequently unable to make a deep impression on their kind. An impassable gulf lies between the prophet and his hearers; while some slight admixture of the missing element would give him the power to make his insight live in them.

<sup>1</sup> *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1905 (Vol. XCV, pp. 545 f.), under dates of Aug. 23, and Sept. 20, 1851, condensed.



## CHAPTER III

### THE WORLD ACCEPTED OR RENOUNCED

BESIDES the stir of feeling toward ourselves and our fellow-men, religion affects, and is affected by, our attitude toward possessions and pleasures, toward marriage and government, toward all that hard system of reality which is often called 'the world.' Allegiance to an unseen rule cannot fail to leave its impress upon our loyalty to what is seen ; religion cannot for ever remain a fact apart and without influence upon the common attractions of life. These must either be made legitimate, converted to spiritual use, or in worshipping we must turn our back upon them as rivals of the highest.

The extremity of the renouncing temper appears in various forms of asceticism, and is found more widespread than many know. Indeed, hardly more than a hint can be given of the wealth of materials that might be used to illustrate a religious feature such as this. With the Malays, religion required at times the departure to some solitary place, and the reduction of the usual allowance of rice ; the Pawang, or medicine-man, among them practises occasional austerities.<sup>1</sup> Among the Abipones of Paraguay, the Zulus, the Haytians, revelations have been sought by abstaining from food.<sup>2</sup> The ancient Mexicans, too, resorted to long fasts and to self-imposed suffering, and among them were those who sought closer communion with the gods by living solitary in the desert under conditions of severe

<sup>1</sup> Skeat : *Malay Magic*, 1900, pp. 59, 81.

<sup>2</sup> Tylor : *Primitive Culture*, 1903, I, 305, 445, and esp. II, 410 ff.

privation.<sup>1</sup> And with many of the more northern American Indians, privations of greater or less severity were practised from religious motive. Among those at the mouth of the Yellowstone, Catlin found that when a boy was "forming his medicine" he wandered away from his father's lodge and absented himself for several days "lying on the ground in some remote or secluded spot, crying to the Great Spirit and fasting the whole time."<sup>2</sup> A Chippewa legend relates that, after fasting for twelve days according to his father's request, an Indian youth was visited by a different spirit from the one he sought, and was changed into a robin.<sup>3</sup> Fasting was included in the ceremonies connected with entrance into certain religious societies among the Indians, and was also practised as part of the prayer for success in war or in hunting, as well as to obtain that special power or mystery known as 'medicine.'<sup>4</sup>

To pass to an entirely different quarter of the world and to a different social situation, the canon of the Confucians speaks of abstentions and vigils as part of the preparation for sacrifice, and of regular fasts and vigils in midsummer and midwinter. At these times "superior men" renounce not only piquant condiments and bodily activity (which some among us have not required the urgings of religion to forego), but more enticing pleasures, including "beautiful sights" and music.<sup>5</sup> The self-denial among the ancient Jews is too well known to need a fresh recital—how those of old obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, and drank no wine all their days, neither they, their wives, their sons, nor their daughters; nor built houses to dwell in, nor had vineyard nor field nor seed, but dwelt in tents:<sup>6</sup> And how he who vowed the vow of a Nazarite must separate himself from wine and all strong drink, and might not eat

<sup>1</sup> Reville: *Native Religions of Mexico and Peru*, 1884, pp. 99 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Catlin: *North American Indians*, 1842, I, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Schoolcraft: *Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge*, 1860, II, 229 f.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 30, 1907, I, 453 f.

<sup>5</sup> Li Ki, IV, 2, 2, 15 (XXVII, 275); IV, 4, 2, 13 (XXVII, 304 f.); VIII, 2, 7 (XXVII, 407). Legge's tr.

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah, XXXV, 8 ff.

even grapes moist or dried, and no razor should come upon his head : <sup>1</sup> and how the Baptist John had raiment of camel's hair, and was girt with leather, and his food was locusts and wild honey.<sup>2</sup>

But in India and in the lands that have come under its religious influence we find such practices so powerfully developed and at so early a time, that some have thought (though perhaps without sufficient warrant) that Christian monasticism there had its origin. The Brahmin anchorites, the Vana-prasthas, living in extreme austerity in the jungle,<sup>3</sup> were known to the ancient Greeks as the naked philosophers, 'gymnosophists.' And the later religion, of the Jains,<sup>4</sup> retained a strong ascetic bent. Indeed, the impulse to regard austerity as essential to religion is here evident even in the popular Indian religions, which are given at stated periods to some privation.<sup>5</sup>

And with all its recommendation of a moderate course, much of Buddhism would seem austere according to our standards. Family life was not for the saint ; the brethren of the monastery were to live by alms and to hold all gifts in common. The founder himself renounced his princely heritage and became for a time a dweller in the wilderness. It did not seem in keeping with the highest piety to carry a handsome walking-stick or umbrella, or to use embroidered counterpanes or fleecy carpets, or to play marbles, to use the "board of sixty-four squares," or to play hop-sotch or jack-straws, or to watch reviews of troops.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, one must be set free from all attachment, from all longing, especially for earthly goods. "How then, O King, shall I address thee ?" asks his queen, of the Great King of Glory. "Thus, O Queen, shouldst thou address me : The nature of all things near and dear to us, O King, is such that we

<sup>1</sup> Numbers, VI, 2 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew, III, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Dubois : *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies*, tr. Beauchamp, 1897, pp. 163 f., 507 ff., 525 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the description of the "naked penitents" of the Jains, in Dubois, *op. cit.*, pp. 702 f.

<sup>5</sup> de la Saussaye : *Manual*, 1891, p. 667.

<sup>6</sup> *Tevigga Sutta*, II (XI, 192-200).

must leave them, divide ourselves from them, separate ourselves from them. Pass not away, O King, with longing in thy heart. Sad is the death of him who longs, unworthy is the death of him who longs. Thine, O King, are these four and eighty thousand cities, the chief of which is the royal city Kusâvatî. Cast away desire for these ! long not after life ! ” And then there passes before his eye his endless possessions—his four and eighty thousand palaces, his divans of gold and silver and ivory, his stately elephants with trappings of gold—and with each there sounds the solemn refrain, “ Cast away desire for these ! long not after life ! ”<sup>1</sup>

If one were to follow the vagaries of religious self-denial, he would have at least to mention those odd dilutions of *askesis* where fish is substituted for flesh on Friday, or where for a season fashionable ladies refrain from attending balls. From such faint and border instances, renunciation passes out into clear absurdity, as where for religion's sake a man gives up his beloved reading of Greek,<sup>2</sup> or where the sect of the ‘ Abecedarians ’ condemns a knowledge even of the alphabet, since all human learning, of which the alphabet is the foundation, is felt to be a hindrance to the progress of the soul.<sup>3</sup>

With this, let us pass to the opposite attitude, that of an acceptance of the world.

The feeling that whatever is in accord with plain morality may be freely used and enjoyed is found in the ancient Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman. The Egyptian especially was no mere worldling, for the life beyond death was recognized by him in all its solemn claim, as is shown by his great care for his soul's welfare and for the service of the gods. But for him, as for the Greek and the Roman, the goods of heaven did not seem to require a surrender of the goods of earth. The gifts of the gods were to be added to the blessings of this present life, rather than to be obtained by re-

<sup>1</sup> Mahâ-Sudassana Sutta, II, 31 ff. (XI, 280 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> See a case reported by Davenport: *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, 1905, p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> Blunt: *Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, etc.*, art. ‘ Abecedarians.’



fusing these. And while we find among the Greeks the thought that heaven is jealous of earthly prosperity, yet such jealousy occurred, for the most part, only when the prosperity became unnatural and excessive.

Still on the acceptant side, but far less undividedly so, is the religion of Islam. "O sons of Adam!" says the Koran, wear "your ornaments to every mosque; and eat and drink, but do not be extravagant, for He loves not the extravagant."<sup>1</sup> "O ye who do believe!" it says again, "eat of the good things wherewith we have provided you, and give thanks unto God if it be Him ye serve. He has only forbidden for you what is dead, and blood, and flesh of swine, and whatsoever has been consecrated to other than God; but he who is forced, neither revolting nor transgressing, it is no sin for him; verily, God is forgiving and merciful."<sup>2</sup> In regard to intoxicating drink and a curious gambling called *el mâisar*, this judicial opinion is handed down: "In them both is sin and profit to men; but the sin of both is greater than the profit of the same."<sup>3</sup> Yet in Paradise, the wine denied in this world is to flow in veritable rivers. Islam has its rigid fasts, especially in the sacred month *Ramadhân*, wherein the Koran was revealed;<sup>4</sup> and worldly enjoyment is tempered by the thought that "the life of this world is but a possession of deceit," that men are not to strain for "the flourish of the life of this world"—the life of this world which is "nothing but a sport and a play." The next life is the real life; only in Paradise is real happiness to be found.<sup>5</sup> Checkered as the record stands with such a puritanic strain—a strain which, it is said, the desert sect of the Snussi, or Senôussi, in Africa, have developed with some rigour<sup>6</sup>—Islam in its canon may be said to present the acceptant strain only a little stronger than the renouncing.

<sup>1</sup> Koran, VII (VI, 140).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II (VI, 24).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II (VI, 32).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II (VI, 26, 28).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, III, XX, XXIX (VI, 69; IX, 45, 124).

<sup>6</sup> Reclus: art. "Senôussi," in *La grande encyclopédie*; de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 266; Cromer: *Modern Egypt*, 1908, II, 38 f.

Less of this restrictive temper so strong in Mohammedism, and more of a spirit like the Greek, appears as we pass to a people that in many ways have seemed of a character opposite to the Greek—their foes of Persia. Yet here again as with the Arab, and indeed as with every great development of religion, there was an ascetic element. In the Zend-Avesta the faithful are required, in making libations to Mithra, “the lord of wide pastures,” to wash their bodies three days and three nights, and undergo thirty stripes; to wash their bodies two days and two nights, and undergo twenty stripes.<sup>1</sup> But this is far from the prevalent spirit of the worship. Mazdaism is generally unrenouncing. Life is pronounced to be the greatest good, greater even than purity.<sup>2</sup> Zarathustra prays that King Vîstâspa may be long-lived, as long-lived as an old man can be; and that he may fulfil the duration of a thousand years ere he comes to the all-happy blissful abode of the holy Ones.<sup>3</sup> Here is no yearning for release, no complaint of the weary burden of existence! Spiritual benefits and the blessings of common life are permitted to mingle in gay confusion: “The first place where the earth feels most happy” is where the faithful stand prepared to sacrifice and pray to Mithra and Râma Hvâstra. The second place of greatest happiness is that “whereon one of the faithful erects a house with a priest within, with cattle, with a wife, with children, and good herds within; and wherein afterwards the cattle go on thriving, holiness is thriving, fodder is thriving, the dog is thriving, the wife is thriving,” child, fire, every blessing of life is thriving.<sup>4</sup> Nor was this acceptance naïve and unreflecting. The opposite ideal was consciously rejected: “Verily I say unto thee, O Spitama Zarathustra! the man who has a wife is far above him who begets no sons; he who keeps a house is far above him who has none; he who has children is far above the childless man; he who has riches is far above him who has none. And of two men,

<sup>1</sup> Mihir Yast, 121 f. (XXIII, 151).

<sup>2</sup> Vendidad, V, 21 (IV, 55).

<sup>3</sup> Vîstâsp Yast, 4, 5 (XXIII, 329).

<sup>4</sup> Vendidad, III, 1-3 (IV, 23).

he who fills himself with meat is filled with the good spirit much more than he who does not do so ; the latter is all but dead.”<sup>1</sup> Apparently, one of the worst things that can be said against the ‘ungodly Ashemaogha’ is, that he *does not eat!*<sup>2</sup> It is significant that a conquering nation like that ruled by Cyrus and Darius and Xerxes should thus in its great religious canon praise the rugged materials of warrior strength.

The religion of Zarathustra, however, but shows the same spirit which appears also in a kindred faith. In the Rig-Veda, prayer is at times for sinlessness, for something like spiritual companionship, and for immortality ;<sup>3</sup> but this does not exclude a love of earthly good. The sacred hymns express a desire for increase of offspring, for long life.<sup>4</sup> “Help us to good, resplendent, abundant wealth which is accompanied by offspring, by good progeny.”<sup>5</sup> Wealth and strength are prayed for, almost as by some head of a modern ‘trust’: “Bring this wealth to us, O powerful Agni, to these our men. May he give us dwelling ; may he give us prosperity ; may he help us in winning booty. And help us to grow strong in fights !”<sup>6</sup> Even horse-racing, which some in our day have not placed high among the aids to piety, is sanctioned by this unascetic faith.<sup>7</sup> Thus a religion which felt so little conflict between the world and the spirit is historically kindred both to the world-acceptance of the Parsee religion and to the world-renunciation so strong in India. Yet even in much of Indian religion there is a desire to temper asceticism with a certain prudence. The Brahmin hermitage, with all its severity, had this important softening : it was not a form of life commended for all one’s years, but only after the fulfilment of the three great duties of the Brahmin—his duty to the *Rishis*, whose

<sup>1</sup> Vendidad, IV, 47, 48 (IV, 46).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 49 (IV, 47).

<sup>3</sup> Vedic Hymns, I, 94, 15 (XLVI, 110).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 1, 22 (XLVI, 222) ; V, 55, 4 (XXXII, 333).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 2, 12 (XLVI, 194), Oldenberg’s tr. ; cf. II, 33, 1 f. (XXXII, 426 f.).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 9, 7 (XLVI, 387) ; cf. V, 54, 13 (XXXII, 326).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 27, 7 and 9 (XLVI, 16), and II, 2, 10 (XLVI, 194).

hymns he must transmit ; to the Pitris, for whose sake he must have offspring to perpetuate the ancestral sacrifices ; and to the gods, by performing for them their appropriate rites. Such renunciation thus had a slightly different tone from that of mediæval Europe ; it comes only after obligations met, and not as though flight were itself a chief satisfaction of divine claims. And there is explicit urging, in other Indian creeds, to avoid excess of privation as well as of indulgence. "Devotion is not his, O Arguna ! who eats too much, nor his who eats not at all," says Krishna, "not his who is addicted to too much sleep, nor his who is ever awake."<sup>1</sup> "There are two extremes, O Bhikkhus," the founder of Buddhism is reported to have said at Benares—"there are two extremes which the man who has given up the world ought not to follow—the habitual practice, on the one hand, of those things whose attraction depends upon the passions, and especially of sensuality—a low and pagan way of seeking satisfaction, unworthy, unprofitable, and fit only for the worldly minded—and the habitual practice, on the other hand, of asceticism or self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy, and unprofitable."<sup>2</sup> "In seeking wisdom then," says another account of the Buddha, "it is not by these austerities a man may reach the law of life. But likewise to *indulge in pleasure* is opposed to right, this is the fool's barrier against wisdom's light."<sup>3</sup> For a religion determined to escape all pain and longing, it would easily seem reasonable not to increase them by long privation.

The feeling that allegiance to the Perfect requires no separation from the world is relatively strong in Christianity, in spite of its ascetic members. Jesus himself is said to have fasted long, on one occasion, in the wilderness ; but the trend of his life and teaching was to make such practices at most a subordinate part of religion. It is by no means

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, VI (VIII, 69).

<sup>2</sup> Dhamma-Kakka-Ppavattana-Sutta, 2 (XI, 146 f.).

<sup>3</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, III, 15, 1240 (XIX, 174), italics in tr.



clear that he was opposed to all private possession. It seems probable that he was not opposed to the authority of secular government ; he apparently felt that there was a side of life that by right belonged to Cæsar. He entered heartily into the social life of his time ; indeed, the scrupulous were led to complain of his freedom in eating and drinking, and of his association with persons of ill repute. "Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber," they said, "a friend of publicans and sinners."<sup>1</sup> He was not afraid, like so many Oriental religionists, of the contaminating influence of woman. If Paul was uncordial toward marriage, and later Christians have at various periods refused to partake of the common goods of life, it is hardly to be attributed to the direct example of Christ himself. His spirit seems to have been expressed more truly by the writer of the *Epistle to Timothy*, who warns against those who in later times will give heed to seducing spirits, "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving. . . . For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." Sects with some special form of renunciation—as the Abelites of Africa in the fifth century—or ascetics of farther-reaching self-denial, are to be found among Christians ; but they are not of such number or historic weight that we need class Christianity as a whole among the renouncing faiths. The Church has included both types of religion, but the life-accepting branch has been the stronger. The American is apt to be over-impressed by the near austerities of the Puritan. But even the Puritans, as the wide history of religion goes, were relatively temperate in their renunciation. They protested against extravagance of dress, against drunkenness, gambling, and bear-baiting ; but, on the whole, there was no general rejection of marriage and the family ; no perpetual fasting, vigil, and flagellation ; no fundamental distrust<sup>+</sup> of private property. The common natural desires

<sup>1</sup> Matthew, XI, 19.

and the enjoyment in their gratification are in keeping with a holy life, according to their poet Milton. The nuptials of Adam and Eve, in *Paradise Lost*, are made a sacred pleasure; and the Angel Raphael actually eats with zest the material meal which Eve prepares:

"So down they sat  
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly  
The Angel, nor in mist—the common gloss  
Of theologians—but with keen dispatch  
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat  
To transubstantiate."<sup>1</sup>

Milton and Luther, with their pleasure in the gentler sides of life, showed a characteristic religious humanism—a union of piety with a hearty approval of sane human interests and enjoyment.

Religious restraint thus stands contrasted with religious freedom, and there is action and reaction between the opposing forces. Freedom may be tempered with hesitation, and renunciation softened with some acceptance. But the two urgings face each other unceasingly. Indeed, there is a close affinity between restraint and want of restraint; and even withdrawal may be expressed in opposite ways. The priests of Egypt and of Judea were most scrupulous in the cleansing of their bodies and their garments.<sup>2</sup> But the scruples of the priests of Zeus at Dodona, or the desire to appear scrupulous, brought the very opposite—an acceptance of discomfort and personal uncleanness.<sup>3</sup> Such contradictions appear also in the life of nuns and monks, where the self-same general view of religion may lead to extreme refinement of dress and cleanliness, and again to disgusting neglect. In India, the Vishnavites eat meat ostentatiously and drink all manner of intoxicants without scruple; while the companion sect, the Sivaites, are marvels of sobriety and abstinence.<sup>4</sup> Or closer together still, the god Siva. in one

<sup>1</sup> Bk. V, 433 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, II, 37; cf. Numbers, XIX, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Iliad, XVI, 233 f.; Strabo: *Geography*, VII, 7, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Dubois: *Hindu Manners*, tr. Beauchamp, 1897, p. 115.

of his characters, is the great Yogi, the great ascetic—naked, covered with ashes, and of a type whose feats of suppression include years of standing on a pillar in rain and fierce heat—a picture made familiar to us by Tennyson's 'St. Simeon Stylites.' But the same Siva, a god of mortification, is in another character licentious, and leads his wild and drunken followers over hill and valley like a Bacchus!<sup>1</sup> Asceticism and sensuality here go almost hand-in-hand; and, indeed, as we go down the scale of religious culture, we find the bond between these opposites exceedingly strong. Among some of the American Indians the youth at initiation is, after a long period of privation, suddenly plunged into wild excess. With the Pipiles of Central America the indulgences at the time of planting cocoa or other seed were preceded by several days of uncommon self-denial; and a similar custom has been observed in Java, when the bloom is on the rice.<sup>2</sup> The riotous Saturnalia, too, of which something must be said in a later chapter, were often the culmination or the precursor of a period of great restraint. Whether for obtaining food or for victory in war, the savage at one moment feels that self-denial is most appropriate; but again, these same aims may seem to him best furthered by self-indulgence.<sup>3</sup> So close do profligacy and austerity lie together.

But not only are the two extremes, license and self-abnegation, thus closely joined, but we are able to see something of the tie which binds them.<sup>4</sup> Extreme restraint is apt to come only where there are strong impulses impatient of control, and where heroic measures alone can check them. There is here, as for the drunkard, no middle ground; it must be either abstinence or debauch. But we may discern also a doctrinal or logical affinity between the two

<sup>1</sup> See de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, pp. 650 ff. for asceticism and sensuality in Hindu religion; cf. also the excesses of Brahmins, in Dubois, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 288 f.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft: *Native Races*, 1886, II, 719 f.; Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, II, 205.

<sup>3</sup> Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, II, 214 f., 305, 309, etc.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 101; cf. Frazer, *op. cit.*, II, 204 f.

forms of life. When one feels that he now is actually united with the divinity, it depends almost on chance whether his sense of union may lead to a condemnation or to an honouring of the natural desires. By reason of his very elevation, by reason of identifying himself with his god, whatever he is strongly impelled to do he may regard as a divine impulse, as something to be obeyed as having the highest sanction. In this way the Hindu Vallabda, affirming the essential unity of the human soul with the highest deity, developed a doctrine of humouring all desires, rather than of restraining them, as did the Hindu ascetics—a teaching eagerly followed into all manner of licentiousness.<sup>1</sup> Or quite the contrary, the devotee may feel that he is now set apart ; and having tasted the delights of the spirit, he can no longer without profanation so much as desire the low pleasures of earth. But the excesses here alluded to must in no wise be confounded with the more normal religious acceptance of the world. This need not run to looseness in the least ; it may merely make suitable provision for our deeper human desires, and permit a harmony between the earthly and the spiritual. The love of perfection now directs and beautifies the native impulses and institutions of society ; there is an attempt to fulfil, and not to destroy, the law both of body and of mind. Where religion leads men to become so lenient toward their rudest instincts that the ordinary civil and moral restraints are felt to be of no importance, this must be regarded as an excessive and unbalanced development of world-acceptance.

<sup>1</sup> de la Saussaye : *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 645.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE INCENTIVES TO RENUNCIATION

THE opposite inclinations to partake and to renounce are not peculiar to the religious life. They appear where there is no indication of religious motives. It is not certain but that the self-control, quite unsupported by reverence, which misers often exercise, is—if not in its beginnings, yet possibly later on—of some like mental nature to asceticism. In the accumulation of wealth without yielding to any of the temptations to indulgence which wealth suggests, there must often be a sense of self-mastery, perhaps even of secret heroism, which lifts the man in his own eyes above his fellows, and seems to him a full reward. But however this may be, we do in other directions find men voluntarily renouncing the common attractions of the world. Many a talent has lain unused, just from contempt of what the world applauds. Whenever there is pressure from without to bring one's conduct or thought into fixed bounds, human nature is tempted to defy these restraints and to obtain the satisfaction which comes of resistance and the forcible maintenance of freedom. A gifted man whom I know has long refused to wear a cravat. This, I imagine, is his declaration of independence. Hamerton's friend who would never wear a black coat was of the same type. There are men innumerable who fairly revel in limitations, if only these be self-imposed. The frontier is largely peopled by this class, and partly from them obtains its ruggedness of thought and conduct. And Bohemia in our cities, with its confused devotion and indifference to

various 'causes,' presents a picture wherein it is hard to discern whether self-restraint for freedom's sake is or is not exceeded by indulgence. Certainly the joy of 'roughing it' in some mountain wilderness is out of all proportion to the direct pleasure in the scenery. The escape from the exactions of 'the world' brings the intoxication which so many feel. The nature-lovers, like Muir or Wordsworth, are often mild secular anchorites preaching the rewards of turning from convention :

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

Such an attitude is not entirely from a dislike for men, or from indifference ; it springs in part from a sense of the endless warfare between the actual and the ideal, and of the relief from this warfare which Nature brings. Clouds and foliage and all other things that are fair in landscape seem to exemplify perfectly what they were intended to exemplify. In this they are like children. They suggest no purpose thwarted ; but beautiful in all that it seems possible for them to be, they bring the feeling that perfection and reality are for once in happy union. Nature is thus the refuge and consolation of idealists. She is the present pledge that it is possible for the spirit to be free from conflict, to attain its inmost desire.

If we were to seek farther the motives of religious acceptance and renunciation, we should have our labour lightened if we regarded one of these attitudes as normal, and tried simply to explain the other as a divergence from the norm. And which of the two would seem the natural mien toward life would perhaps depend on one's own temperament. Somewhat arbitrarily, then, let us assume that world-acceptance stands less in need of explanation, and that the departure—world-rejection—alone presents a problem. Indeed, those who are in the counsels of evolution, with its varieties of 'selection,' its mutations and survivals, would doubtless find no difficulty in making clear to us that human

society could never have lived and flourished if the great mass of men had not been sympathetic toward its customs and institutions, as well as toward health, strength, and some possessions. The type that is bent on the religious rejection of all these things—like its far-distant analogue, the anti-moral or criminal type of character—must from this point of view appear as the exception, the biological ‘sport.’

But this need be no final point of view. For we can trace world-rejection more nearly to its source than would be implied in calling it a freak. It becomes in some measure intelligible when we see the many influences which foster it in advanced society, and see also some of its springs in savage life. We might pass to its early history first.

There is among savages a deep-seated conviction, not only that evil is very real and insistent, but that its hold upon us may be eased by certain avoidances or inflictions. The Delaware Indians, for example, used both physical emetic and scourging from foot to head to expel evil from the mouth. Especially in connection with death and with the peril which lies in the possible entrance of the spirit of the dead into the living, is scourging practised among savages. Thus the Banmanas of Senegambia have little children beat one another when one of their number dies.<sup>1</sup> And the Guahibos on the Orinoco, at a ceremony the year after a chief's death, have his widow and her future husband scourged with rods. And another woman, laid on the chief's grave, has her tongue pierced with a bone until the blood runs down her breast.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, when a man of some note dies among the Arrawaks of British Guiana, a great feast of several days is given, a year after his death, and the relatives dance over his grave, lashing “each other with whips prepared for that purpose, till frequently the blood gushes out, and they are afterwards obliged to keep their hammocks for days together.”<sup>3</sup> But if scourging is

<sup>1</sup> Frazer : *Golden Bough*, 1900, III, 130 f.

<sup>2</sup> Crevaux : *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud*, 1883, p. 548.

<sup>3</sup> Bernau : *Missionary Labours in British Guiana*, 1847, p. 52.

at times to expel evil, it is not always for this purpose. One of the natives of French Guiana besought the visiting whites to do him the service of applying the rods to him. "I beat him my best," writes Coudreau, "and the face of the good Ouéri beamed in gratitude. It seems that to be flogged by a chief is an infallible means of inculcating all manner of physical and moral qualities."<sup>1</sup> Longer, and in some ways far more serious, trials have to be endured among other peoples. He who was to become the Inca of Peru must fast for a month without seeing the light of day.<sup>2</sup> And the Indians of Granada "kept those who were to be Rulers or Commanders, whether Men or Women, lock'd up for several Years, when they were Children, some of them seven Years, and this so close, that they were not to see the Sun, for if they should happen to see it, they forfeited the Lordship, eating certain Sorts of Food appointed, and those who were their Keepers at certain Times went into the Retreat, or Prison, and scourg'd them severely."<sup>3</sup>

Thus there grows rank the idea of the riddance of evil, or of the attainment of good, by fasting or flagellation or by withholding oneself from acts or objects mysteriously connected with spiritual peril. To illustrate this feeling fully would require one to enter a further field of avoidance, a part of which goes by the name of 'taboo.' Certain animals must not be killed at all, or they may not be killed by men who belong to a special society or clan or totem. Other animals may be killed only within limited times, else there will be misfortune. It is dangerous to allow one's reflection to be in water. The regalia of the chief may have a deadly effect if touched by common hands. The trimmings from the hair or finger-nails, or even the spittle, must be carefully destroyed or hidden, lest they fall into another's hands and give a magic power over him from whom they came.

<sup>1</sup> Coudreau : *Chez nos Indiens*, 1895, p. 544.

<sup>2</sup> Cieza de Leon : *Second Part of the Chronicle of Peru*, tr. Markham, 1883, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Herrera : *History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America*, commonly call'd *The West-Indies*, tr. Stevens, 1726, V, 88.



The restrictions upon free and careless conduct, if one is to avoid evil from human enemies or from the ill-will of spirits and gods, are really beyond number. There are acts that must be *done* to avert calamity, but there are infinitely more things that must *not* be done. Indeed, just as fear is prominent in early religion, and fear leads normally, not to free conduct but to restraint, to a kind of paralysis of action ; so the early code of religion and morality is developed marvellously on the restrictive, the negative side. The need of check in childhood, shown by the frequency of the mother's negative commands—"Don't do that!"—is emblematic of the early religious and moral training of the race. The rules of conduct pleasing to the gods are predominantly *prohibitions*. And even when we are far beyond a primitive stage of religion, the divine law may still be summed up in the form of "Thou shalt not." The Hebrew Ten Commandments are a good instance of this negative turn in early morals. But examples could be drawn from other sources :

"Thus spake the Great King of Glory :

'Ye shall slay no living thing.

Ye shall not take that which has not been given.

Ye shall not act wrongly touching the bodily desires.

Ye shall speak no lie.

Ye shall drink no maddening drink.

Ye shall eat as ye have eaten.'"<sup>1</sup>

And in the Rules of Conduct in the *Tevigga Sutta*—a part of the southern Buddhist scriptures—prohibition is added to prohibition. In the portion which I shall here reproduce, it will be noticed that each section sets forth primarily what must be *put away*. Over against the evil that must be put away, at first a positive virtue is commended, but soon the laws lapse into requirements of avoidance pure and simple.

" 'Now wherein, *Vâsettha*, is his conduct good ? ' "

'Herein, O *Vâsettha*, that putting away the murder of

<sup>1</sup> Mahâ-Sudassana-Sutta, I, 16 (XI, 253).

that which lives, he abstains from destroying life. The cudgel and the sword he lays aside ; and, full of modesty and pity, he is compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life !

‘ This is the kind of goodness that he has.

‘ He refrains from injuring any herb or any creature. He takes but one meal a day ; abstaining from food at night-time, or at the wrong time. He abstains from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows. He abstains from wearing, using, or adorning himself with garlands, and scents, and unguents, and he abstains from lofty couches and large beds.

‘ This, too, is the kind of goodness that he has.

‘ He abstains from the getting of silver or gold. He abstains from the getting of grain uncooked. He abstains from the getting of flesh that is raw. He abstains from the getting of any woman or girl. He abstains from the getting of any bondmen or bondwomen. He abstains from the getting of sheep or goats. He abstains from the getting of fowls or swine. He abstains from the getting of elephants, cattle, horses, and mares. He abstains from the getting of fields or lands.

‘ This, too, is the kind of goodness that he has.

‘ He refrains from carrying out those commissions on which messengers can be sent. He refrains from buying and selling. He abstains from tricks with false weights, alloyed metals, or false measures. He abstains from bribery, cheating, fraud, and crooked ways.

‘ This, too, is the kind of goodness that he has.

‘ He refrains from maiming, killing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plundering villages, or obtaining money by threats of violence.

‘ This, too, is the kind of goodness that he has.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

The longer statements of these requirements are still more negative in form, more confined to prohibition.

Now in all right conduct, there inevitably is avoidance of evil as well as the doing of good deeds. And asceticism

<sup>1</sup> Tevigga Sutta, ch. II, The *Kūla Silam* (XI, 189 ff.).

is, in part, an extravagant development of this negative side. It has received a legacy of restraint, and has increased the inheritance an hundredfold. The check of action, so important as a preparation for sound conduct, has here been made the main and almost sole ingredient. As in the life of the body it is important to have inhibition—to have some physiological brake, lest the heart, for instance, shall beat too fast, and every excitement to the eye or ear attract attention or cause some inconvenient muscular response—so, in our general conduct, there must be inhibition. Renunciation we may regard as an almost pathological overgrowth of this inhibitive function. The religious sanction is here laid upon hesitancy, upon the dread of doing the wrong thing, rather than upon free activity for good, upon throwing all one's energy into the accomplishment of useful ends.

But this is not all that encourages renunciation, even in early society. The motive for a certain phase of self-denial, found in one of the Chinese classics, will perhaps here be found of help. Fasting and vigils in midsummer are urged, in order “to bring about that state of settled quiet in which the influence of darkness and decay shall obtain its full development.”<sup>1</sup> And in midwinter, regarding similar abstinence, superior men wish “all affairs to be quiet, while they wait for the settlement of those principles of darkness and decay, and brightness and growth.”<sup>2</sup> There is here a suggestion of something like sympathetic assistance to the great forces of nature while in crisis—a feeling which runs through much of the conduct of early man. He often refrains from gratifying his normal passions at the times that are critical for the plenty of his yams or his turtles, or for success against his enemies. And women and children remaining at home during war or hunting must show the restraint which is needed to give the right aid to those away on their expedition.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lî Kî*, IV, 2, 2, 15 (XXVII, 275).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 4, 2, 13 (XXVII, 305).

<sup>3</sup> Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, I, 29 ff.; II, 210 f., 216.

These instances all point to an impulse to express by conduct a sympathy with the victory or embarrassment of invisible powers—a thought which would enter, when further spiritualized, into the fasting of Lent and especially of Good Friday, as though the universe were again, in memory, passing through its supreme trial, and man for sympathy could not but remain hushed and expectant. But beyond the involuntary stillness of one who is absorbed in watching a stupendous conflict, there may also be a deliberate attempt to assist the gods in their trials directly, as we know from the Vedas and the Avesta,<sup>1</sup> as well as from the rites of many a primitive people. What a man forgoes and gives to the gods, adds to their strength and helps them overcome their enemies. The welfare of the gods is here consciously recognized as dependent on the interest and support of men. In primitive society the sympathetic self-denials are more occasional, while the renunciations which appear in later religion are often lasting. But these occasional fastings and vigils at such times as the great powers are in crisis may well have contributed to more enduring self-denials. Especially in the zeal to fulfil to the uttermost the requirements of divinity, it would be easy to forget the original motives for such quiet and restraint, and these would tend to seem virtuous in themselves. But if they were of merit when done occasionally, how much more meritorious would denial be if continued through a lifetime !

In pointing out the incentives to renunciation, it must also be said that there is an emotional stir or excitability that comes from extreme self-denial, whether it be a refusal of food and drink, or a long separation from one's kind. And this excitability doubtless is dimly appreciated as a religious aid, and tends to justify asceticism in the eyes of those who practise it. Our nerves become almost morbidly ready to respond to all manner of stimulation, or even to explode spontaneously, when there has been a continued drain upon their strength. The tired man is apt to be the

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 138, 288.



irritable man. The person ill-nourished or exhausted has less poise, is more emotional, and with him laughter and tears lie near the surface. The verge of starvation or of mortal thirst often brings visions and voices and an infinite longing; while those cut off from all associates—the prisoner in his solitary cell, the lonely shepherd, the companionless lighthouse keeper—may become insane from the weight of their unnatural life.

Now where piety is measured by its emotional depth, great value must inevitably be attached to all those devices that make men less stolid, more open to the play of sentiment, less bound by the facts that lie within our sensible horizon, more ready to accept as real the world that lies beyond. Partly because they work in this direction, are solitude, hunger, and the want of sleep felt to be important for the religious. Fasting and vigils and the scourge bring no assistance to careful reasoning or to practical action in some intricate design; but other sides of the mind receive aid—the whole imaginative tissue, the memory, the vague or impetuous desire. And when once these have been stirred to life, it is easy for the religious to give them a religious direction. Mortification is thus well planned to contribute to the emotional and visional, if not visionary, side of religion. Ascetics are skilled specialists in the physiological nurture of emotion. The stoppage of all the ordinary outlets, the damming of the normal channels which, in common life, give vent to impulse and feeling, causes these to accumulate until they burst in floods into the religious field.

But in solitude and in renunciation generally there is more than a mere fondness for emotion. There is an active distrust of what are called 'the senses'—a distrust which has some ground. It is true that of 'the senses' religionists often have a somewhat indistinct idea, meaning by the term at times the five special senses, of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch; or again, more especially the appetites and 'lusts' which go with these, as well as with hunger and

other grumblings of the body. And often in his attempt to kill off one group of impressions which distract him from his meditations, he cultivates a whole crop of insidious sensations—hunger, thirst, muscular weariness, and organic pain. There is here, of course, no real escape from the senses into a supersensuous realm. But even with such misguided efforts, there seems to be this right thought, that there exists a certain rivalry between the senses and the higher processes of mind ; and that if the soul would be free, it must not too continually live in its eyes and ears and skin. Well-trained powers of observation, which we at times hear warmly commended, are not an unmixed blessing. One must have the power also of *not* observing, of being negligent of his surroundings, if he is to think. No one can well put into mental order what comes to him, if his sense-impressions are intrusive. The connection of the parts of a musical composition, the thought which a speaker is trying to express, is less appreciated when one is so near that the ears are stunned with thundering sound. The richest colour in painting rarely goes with the most accurate drawing, with the nicest sense of form. The tones of landscape or of the human face come out most clear when we cease to recognize what the coloured objects are, but take them in through half-closed eye-lids, or with head turned or inverted. There is thus some jealousy between our senses and our understanding. And the perception of this, when given an inappropriate importance, may well have added momentum to the ascetic movement to deny all right to the senses. Religion is an appreciation of an unseen world ; and the intercourse with that world is helped by veiling the too insistent presence of sensuous things.

But the religious misgiving in regard to our sensations is due not alone to the fact that their vivid presence hinders the perception of subtle spiritual bonds. The senses, as I have already said, are closely allied with vegetative and animal desire, and thus they lead us to consider the ascetic distrust of the body and all its cravings.

The body is often regarded as the especial seat of sin. Plato at times sees all our ignorance and perversion as coming from the soul's connection with the world of matter. When once set free by death from these physical bonds, it will behold clear-eyed the divine Ideas, and then can do no wrong. And the Apostle Paul in a like manner contrasts the flesh and the spirit. The mind, in its own essential life, may be pure, but brought to sin by the overpowering influence of the body. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."<sup>1</sup> In a somewhat similar way the Buddha, in a Chinese narrative of his life, likens the senses to wild or ill-broken horses, to which the wise and prudent will allow no license; they are our greatest foes, the cause of all our misery.<sup>2</sup> And where natural impulse is under condemnation, it is most fit that woman should by men be regarded as a menace to the spirit:

"How are we to conduct ourselves, Lord, with regard to womankind?" asks one of the Buddha's disciples.

"Don't see them, Ānanda."

"But if we should see them, what are we to do?"

"Abstain from speech, Ānanda."

"But if they should speak to us, Lord, what are we to do?"

"Keep wide awake, Ānanda."<sup>3</sup>

This feeling, which in the Christian canon finds expression in the Epistles rather than in the Gospel, was not entirely absent even from such world-acceptant peoples as the Greeks and the Egyptians.<sup>4</sup> The latter were able to locate the source of sin with great exactness in the body. When someone of importance was embalmed, we are told by Porphyry that the Egyptians "take out the *stomach* and

<sup>1</sup> Romans, VII, 22 f.

<sup>2</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, V, 26, 2030 f. (XIX, 297).

<sup>3</sup> Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, V, 23 (XI, 91).

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, II, 64.

put it into a coffer, and, holding the coffer to the sun, protest, one of the embalmers making a speech on behalf of the dead. This speech, which Euphantos translated from his native tongue, is as follows: 'O Lord of the Sun, and all ye gods who give life to man, receive me and make me a companion of the eternal gods. For the gods, whom my parents made known to me, as long as I have lived in this world I have continued to reverence, and those who gave birth to my body I have ever honoured. And as for other men, I have neither slain any, nor defrauded any of anything entrusted to me, nor committed any other wicked act; but if by chance I have committed any sin in my life, by either eating or drinking what was forbidden, not of myself did I sin, but owing to these members'—at the same time showing the coffer in which the stomach was. And having said this, he throws it into the river, and embalms the rest of the body as being pure."<sup>1</sup>

This feeling that the stomach or the body generally is the culprit upon whom the condemnation for a man's sins should fall is a natural result of the constant need of whipping into line those impulses which guard the interests of the body. We feel that we have other things to do than eat, drink, sleep, and keep warm; and our sense of the importance of our higher purposes makes us regard the vegetative and animal functions as rivals, indeed as enemies, of what we value most. The body has a right to exist, and a right to clamour if neglected; but it has no right to rule. The interest in human faces and in conversation, the curiosity regarding the connection of events, the enjoyment of scenery and adventure—these have to fight for a place along with the craving for nourishment and shelter. Too often there is a real clash among these various interests; and it is natural that partisanship should then arise, and that the incompatibility of the rivals should be exaggerated. We needlessly lose hope of ever making our various desires live

<sup>1</sup> Porphyry: *De Abst.*, IV, 10, quoted by Sayce: *Religs. of Anc. Egypt and Babylonia*, 1902, p. 64 f.



together in love and charity, and feel that there is nothing for it but to regard the flesh and all the physical world as belonging to the devil. Thus asceticism often properly comes from the fact that physiological cravings stand in the way of noble purpose. And the distrust of the body, so begot, is nourished by the conflict between the senses themselves and our higher mental life. Any sane man must keep the sense-organs and all the body in subjection ; the ascetic merely carries this effort to an extreme.

But besides the need that certain of our interests be made handmaids to the others, there is an exceedingly strong motive to renunciation in the feeling that the things of this world are dear to us ; and, just because they are dear, make precious offerings to divinity. It is a peculiar turn to the longing to give all that is good to God. I have already spoken of that motive to self-denial, where the savage believes that his own abstinence adds strength to the heavenly powers. But there is nothing more changeable than the ideas which lie behind the self-same rite. In the later life of religion the refusal of proper food and clothing, the severing of all social ties, is no longer felt as directly adding anything to the deity. The value of the act now lies in the penitence, the submissiveness, which it reveals. By divesting himself of all that seems of earthly good, man expresses his sense of guilt ; without waiting for Heaven to impose it on him, he metes out retribution for his own shortcomings ; by privations which seem to him but of time and of the body, he becomes assured of freedom from more serious loss. And further, he shows to the uttermost his fealty to his Lord. The forms of loyalty here merge with those of sacrifice. Even though the gratification that is foregone cannot actually be added to the possessions of God, yet there has been symbolized by man the sole value of the Ideal. And the rare expression of his fidelity to the unseen good, helps to bridge the gulf which for ever opens between the worshipper and Him he worships. The ascetic life must therefore be regarded as in part a special

form of sacrifice : the world and all its attractions are laid, like a gift, upon the altar. The multitude of intentions and ideas which cluster about sacrifice may in this way become united also with ascetic renunciation.

Thus there are many incentives to a complete surrender of the joys of earth. Man is brought to such surrender by sympathy with the crisis of spiritual powers, and by the thought that human conduct can in some degree affect their welfare. Self-denial increases the readiness of emotion which may be turned into religious channels. There is an appreciation of the peril to the soul which comes from the senses and the body generally ; and in the attempt to ward off the danger, extravagant measures are taken that tend to kill the very life they would protect. In the need which all men have, to bring their impulses into order so that these may all conspire to an acceptable end, there comes to be an undue value set upon inhibition. Suppression, which is good when room is thereby made for better things, comes to be regarded as a primary end ; and human duty is seen entirely out of drawing. But to express to the uttermost one's honour to the Ideal is also an important motive in asceticism. For love of divinity nothing may be retained as ours. Whatever we hold dear, whatever is good either for the body or for the mind must be laid at the feet of the Perfect, and even then no sufficient token has been given of its sublimity.

## CHAPTER V

### THE OPPOSITION OF GLOOM AND CHEER

THERE have perhaps become apparent in religion its immense suppression and restraint, standing in contrast to its vital enlargement and inclusion—rival impulses that when free and without bounds, appear as *askesis* and as license. But joined to these are further rivals that should be examined, namely, joy and sadness, and the still broader contrast between mere excitement and calm, between ardour and coolness if not chill.

For the clearest examples of religion unimpassioned yet real we might go to the ancient world. In the best days of the Republic, the Roman character, little given to excess of any kind, showed in religion its moderation (in spite of occasional outbursts) by a well-ordered worship of Jupiter and his great companions, and in homelier rites to the spirits of its ancestors and of the hearth. And in Confucianism religion is as unimpassioned as the Roman ; indeed, is perhaps less swayed by stormy feeling. Matter-of-fact provision for the honour and comfort of the forefathers ; the official payment, by the State, of what is due to the great nature-divinities of earth and sky—this is the tone pervading the ancient canon. The religious world is here a reality ; but it kindles warmth, without flame, in the soul. Indeed, established religion generally is moderate. In countries like England or Germany, the charge is sometimes made that the official religion is marked by the chill and rigour of death. The very breadth of such organizations, however, requires them to shelter divergent types ; and so, on the

whole, they are neither ardent nor cold. Extreme opposes extreme, and the dominant tone is restrained. The fervent type is well illustrated by the older Jewish prophets, with their unsounded depths of passion. And in the rush and vehemence which have made Mohammedanism such a world-power, we see the earnestness of the Semite again displayed, although in an altered direction and with less nobility of design than with the Jew. In Christianity (which, too, is in some sense a child of Judaism), the Dominicans and early Franciscans, the Wesleyans of the eighteenth century, the Salvation Army of to-day, show an almost consuming fire. But Christianity as a whole is calm rather than excited—in part because of the balance and control in Jesus himself, and in part from the strong intellectual and purposive traits of the great peoples who, in adopting it, have helped to develop and fix its character. Thus the temperance of the Greek, and the Roman's practical poise, have done much to keep Christianity sober as well as strong.

There is perhaps little danger that calm and excitement will be thought always to stand out sharp and definite, or that a type of character in which one of them appears will seem of necessity to exclude the other. There are in the world all degrees; and in most of the advanced religions are found intermediate grades, as well as representatives of the contrasting types in all their purity. In fact, a single person may show at different times the characteristics of both extremes; his religion, at first strongly emotional, may later pass into quiet purpose and steady light. Or under the urging of others, a devotion normally calm may for a time be passionate. With this slight reference to the opposition of coolness and excitement—slighter here because at other points it reappears—the contrast between joy and sadness will be considered.

It is so well known that religion runs to these opposite poles of feeling, and instances must lie so ready in each man's recollection, that it would be improvident to spend



much time in trying to show the reality of the contrast. The heightened pleasure of many of the early Christians, the impression which they gave (though by no means universally) that they had received tidings of great joy, stands sharp against the despondent mood which piety has often shown. Yet even with the Christians there was a sense of responsibility, a sense of the evil of the times, that gave a sombre border to their rejoicing. So the best instance in the old world of a cheerful religion would perhaps be found, not with the Christian, but with the Greek. It is true that the Greek gave no such prominence to the joys of the future life, as did the Christian; but this need not bring any false estimate of the tone of each religion. Logically the Greek perhaps ought to have felt sadder than the Christian, but such things do not go by schoolmen's rules. He enjoyed the world about him, the conversation and disputes of men, the plays and festivals and noble buildings, the life and struggles of men and gods. Buoyant humanist to the core, delighting in all the tone and beat of life, he was not to be depressed by anything in this world or in the world beyond. He was not unmindful of the future, but the future was distant and unreal compared with the riches now within his reach. Especially the faith set forth in Homer is for the most part brilliant, having its gladness touched only with that solemnity which befits the universe at festival.

As we move eastward we find a stately joy of faith, in some ways like the Greek, chanted in the hymns of the Rig-Veda. Here is expressed the love of light, the rejoicing in the music of the gods of storm, the security felt in the protecting care of Agni, the kinsman, the dear friend of men. Yet even while exulting in the glory of the gods—of Indra and the Maruts—there are premonitions of that evil which later is utterly to overcast the heavens. The worshipper prays that the “hideous darkness” may be hidden from him; that “every tusky fiend may be destroyed.”<sup>1</sup> Or

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, I, 86, 10 (XXXII, 154), Müller's tr.

there comes before his mind the thought of Varuna, stern and angry—Varuna, whose wrath toward men must be turned by the interceding prayers of the faithful god of Fire.<sup>1</sup> And the Persian, who also was like the Greek in many ways, showed in his scriptures a joy not unbroken, yet deep and wide. The sense of evil, though strong, was not yet overpowering; it was lightened by assurance of coming victory. A thought to which allusion has already been made, shows in the form of creed their confidence in the divine: the day would come when the great Deliverer, the child of Zarathustra, would complete his father's work, conquering the foes of man and of God, and renewing the whole earth in goodness.<sup>2</sup> Here the mood wavers; at first depressed, it rises in the end, and remains confident. The Parsee's joy is further reflected in a kind of pæan to "the holy Zarathustra; who first thought what is good," in whom was heard "the word of holiness; who was the lord and master of the world"; "in whose birth and growth the waters and the plants rejoiced; in whose birth and growth the waters and the plants grew; in whose birth and growth all the creatures of the good creations cried out, Hail! 'Hail to us! for he is born, the Âthravan, Spitama Zarathustra.'"<sup>3</sup> In its large outlines such a faith lays no such stress on evil as is often said. The world here, as for the Jew confidently expecting the Messiah, and for the Christian who sees the world destined to be the seat of a city that shall descend from God, is of a happy outcome. The feeling of joy is no longer simple and unmixed; it has tried its strength by overcoming pain, and retains this in memory.

Sad and weary religion is best illustrated in the Orient. It is true that in much of the religion even of India, the home of so much sorrow, there is an undertone of joy—as in the hymns to the Maruts and to Agni and to other Vedic gods. And in more modern India, beside the gloomy and

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, IV, 1, 2-5 (XLVI, 307).

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 12, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Farvardin Yast, XXIV, 88 ff. (XXIII, 201 f.).

malign Siva, there is worshipped the friendly Vishnu,<sup>1</sup> and religious festivals of great hilarity are held, of which more will be said. But sadness here may completely overshadow the joy. In Buddhism, as it appears in many of the scriptures, there is an elevation, a longing for the holy way, which makes the sadness seem rich and almost beautiful; yet its ideal is an impassive life, unmoved alike by pain or pleasure—a passionless existence leading to a death that never yields to life. This longing for extinction<sup>2</sup> is based on the feeling that life is bitter to the very core. Not that it is now bitter, but may at some time be sweet. Life is incapable of yielding any real satisfaction, save the one of attaining endless death. There remains the duty to seek a better life, then, not as something good for its own sake, but merely as a means by which absolute extinction may at last be reached. Religion here viewing the hopeless pain that seems inseparable from living, becomes a sublime suicide; and the drama of existence is seen as utter tragedy.

The minuteness with which, in Buddhism, the sources and structure of suffering, and the modes of escape from it, are analysed is marvellous :

“ ‘ Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering.

‘ Birth is attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment, the conditions of individuality and their cause, are painful.

‘ This then, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering.

<sup>1</sup> Monier-Williams : *Modern India and the Indians*, 1887, pp. 194 f.

<sup>2</sup> The doctrine is at times softened down to mean merely the escape from desire and individuality, with some kind of existence still remaining. In the *Saddharma-Pundarikâ*, for example—ch. XV (XXI, 302)—the Lord declares that his extinction is not real, but is merely announced or assumed, in order to have greater influence upon men—i.e. it is a pious fraud.

‘Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering.

‘Verily, it is that thirst, or craving, causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now there—that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the passions, or the craving for a future life, or the craving for success in this present life.

‘This then, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering.

‘Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering.

‘Verily, it is the destruction, in which no passion remains, of this very thirst ; the laying aside of, the getting rid of, the being free from, the harbouring no longer of this thirst.

‘This then, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering.

‘Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the way which leads to the destruction of sorrow. Verily ! it is this noble eightfold path ; that is to say : Right views, Right aspirations, Right speech, Right conduct, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, and Right contemplation.

‘This then, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of sorrow.’<sup>1</sup>

And at the village of Kōṭigāma “the Blessed One addressed the brethren, and said : ‘It is through not understanding and grasping four Noble Truths, O brethren, that we have had to run so long, to wander so long in this weary path of transmigration, both you and I !’

‘And what are these four ?’

‘The noble truth about sorrow ; the noble truth about the cause of sorrow ; the noble truth about the cessation of sorrow ; and the noble truth about the path that leads to that cessation. But when these noble truths are grasped and known, the craving for existence is rooted out, that

<sup>1</sup> Dhamma-Kakka-Ppavattana-Sutta, 5-8 (XI, 148-150).



which leads to renewed existence is destroyed, and then there is no more birth ! ' ' ' <sup>1</sup>

The eye seems, here and everywhere, fixed upon the pain that lies in all existence. Not in this world alone is life too sad to be endured ; it has no attraction for the wise, even with the very gods. " You, by suffering pain," the Bodhisattva is made to say, " You, by suffering pain, desire earnestly to obtain the joys of birth in heaven ; whilst I desire to escape from the three worlds, and therefore I give up what my reason tells me must be rejected." <sup>2</sup> So the escape from sin is not for the greater good beyond, but rather because of the suffering which unholiness brings. He that has finally rid himself of the evils, the *Āsavas*, " has destroyed that Craving Thirst, by thorough penetration of mind he has rolled away every Fetter, and has made an end of Pain." <sup>3</sup> It is as if the nerves of suffering were exposed at every point, and with the pain a profound melancholy had settled on the soul. Indeed, no melancholy could well bring a more sombre view of life, except for the one ray, that life need not last for ever. By this one fact alone, then, the universe is not the worst conceivable, and the pessimism fails to be absolute. It is by a hair's breadth, like that narrow margin by which the Agnostic escapes pure nescience, in that he knows one truth—that Truth is unattainable.

The worshippers of Zeus and the followers of Buddha thus illustrate opposite poles of feeling, and with and between them range the rest of men. But no people and no great religion is uniform ; and a benefit of sects, and one of the causes of their existence, is that they provide for various temperaments. There are Buddhists that, by rejecting the view that life at its best is evil, depart from the type just described ; just as, by an opposite movement, the normal Jewish faith is darkened until it becomes hope-

<sup>1</sup> *Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta*, II, 1-2 (XI, 23), and cf. IV, 1-2 (XI, 64).

<sup>2</sup> *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King*, II, 7, 554 (XIX, 79).

<sup>3</sup> *Sabbāsava Sutta*, 38 (XI, 307).

less in 'Ecclesiastes,' while the tone of Christianity becomes uncharacteristically morose in the religion reflected in the New England Primer,<sup>1</sup> the witchcraft persecutions, and the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. But time tends to avenge such injuries, and the same New England of Puritan depression has in these latter days become the seat of a fantastic cult of health and cheer. In its little way this change is in keeping with a new Humanism that is becoming widespread in its opposition to the earlier unhappy reverence ; in much the same way—to compare small things with great—that the confident humanism of the Renaissance was opposed to the cheerless Middle Age. Pleasure, as a rule, rises and falls with the intensity of life, and the increased vigour of our time is reflected, if often with distortions, in this quickened current of cheer.

Yet our normal frame seems to repudiate one-sidedness, either of satisfaction or of dismay ; it will have neither as a permanent state. Civilization may make of longer duration the pendular swing toward one or the other limit ; but in time, whether men go in broadcloth or in breech-clout, there is a natural retardation or reversal of any prolonged emotional trend. With the simpler-minded, the changes between fear and elation in religion are apt to be more rapid and extravagantly expressed, as with children almost the same moment may see frolic succeeding tears. Some attention to these alternations among the more primitive or naïve, will help us to see in better perspective the contrasts of feeling that appear in great religion.

With regard to savages, there are observers who regard them, for the most part, as oppressed by fear. The thought of great and devastating natural forces, of ravenous beasts of prey, of human enemies bent on torture and death, of

<sup>1</sup> With such texts as this for the beginner:

"I in the Burying Place may see  
Graves shorter there than I ;  
From Death's Arrest no Age is free.  
Young Children too may die."

spirits difficult to placate and possessing mysterious powers of injury—the thought of these and of endless other sources of peril unsuspected by the coddled citizen is supposed to keep alive an incessant dread. And doubtless this is true with some who are strongly predisposed to fear (for the fears of children show that there may be here a distinct nervous and mental predisposition to fright, quite apart from any experience of injury from the object feared—as when a child I know shrieked at the first touch of some unportentious fur, and again at the sight of a miniature dog of stuffed flannel). With such, it may be in a measure true, that *primus in orbe timor fecit deos*; or, at least, that fear determines, for the time, the central features of the nearer divinities. But this is not universally the case. In reconstructing the mind of the savage, for purposes of science, students have been tempted to lay too much stress upon those feelings which (they believe) would dominate themselves, were they placed out in wild Nature. But no one can actually live in some forest or mountain wilderness without appreciating that there are other things in such a place than beasts and savages, flood and tornado, avalanche and lightning. If we leave out of account the exhilaration of going beneath great trees, or of scrambling along cliffs and over snow-capped peaks (to which, let us suppose, the savage is insensible), yet mere sunshine and wind, exercise and appetite, give a spring and confidence of outlook, that cannot all be due to our previous confinement in the city. It would not be at all surprising to find that the savage often has the resilience of the child, and even in religion is only exceptionally a prey to dread. His fears are real and compulsive while they last, but before long give way to impassivity or action.

The seasonal crises of the year—midsummer, midwinter, spring—are frequently the occasion of religious celebrations. And these pass readily into saturnalia, in which there is often not excitement merely, but wild joy. The general name for such occasions of excess is taken from the

best known of them all—the old Italian custom commemorating, it is said, the ancient and blessed reign upon earth of the god Saturn. At these true Saturnalia, the whole population gave itself up to merry-making and indulgence; everywhere was seen drunkenness; and, in the disorder and inversion of common ways, feasts were spread for the slaves, who were now served by their masters.<sup>1</sup> But this feast of Saturn was not without its kind among other peoples of the olden world. At the Greek *Cronia*, widely celebrated over Greece, in honour of Cronos and his wife Rhea, field labourers and masters held a joyous feast together when the harvest was brought in—a feast which led, at times, to unbearable license of the slaves. Like it was the festival of Hermes held in Crete, when slaves fared sumptuously while their masters waited on them; or the festival at Troezen when slaves played dice with freemen and were feasted by their lords; or the *Peloria*, celebrated by the Thessalians, in which prisoners were set free, and slaves and strangers were bidden to tables richly spread and served by freemen, while the utmost liberty of speech was then allowed. Like this, too, in many ways was the Babylonian and Persian festival called the *Sacæa*. At this time slaves ruled their masters; and one slave in particular (or, according to a different authority, a condemned criminal) was raised to the royal throne and clothed in the royal robes, and while the festival lasted he was allowed to live in luxury, eating, drinking, and making free with the king's women; at the close he was stripped and flogged and led to execution.<sup>2</sup> At this Sacæan festival, celebrated wherever there was a temple of the goddess Anaitis, men and women passed day and night in drunken wantonness.<sup>3</sup> The excesses of such a festival recall those connected with the worship of Dionysos and of Cybele, where, with processions and dramatic shows, there was endless drinking, and frenzied

<sup>1</sup> Seneca: Letter XVIII; Lucian: *Saturnalia*; Athenæus: *Deipnosoph.*, XIV, 44 f.

<sup>2</sup> Athenæus: *Deipnosoph.*, XIV, 44 f. (639 f.); Dio Chrysostom: Orat. IV, 162 R.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo: *Geography*, XI, 8, 4-5.



and tumultuous shouts ; while women, rushing about with streaming hair, tore with their teeth the raw flesh of animals.<sup>1</sup>

To understand better such unbridled times, there should be recounted from savage life certain festivals more or less similar to them in their emotion, if not in their actual conduct.

Among the Iroquois the New Year holidays, which last for three weeks, are kept with feasting, dances, confession, and chants of praise.<sup>2</sup> The extravagance at a time of the year not far from this is best seen in the words of a very early observer : " We witnessed the ceremony on the twenty-second of February, of this year, 1656," writes the Jesuit missionary, Father Jean de Quens. " Immediately upon the announcement of the festival by these public cries, nothing was seen but men, women, and children, running like maniacs through the streets and cabins—this, however, in a far different manner from that of Masqueraders in Europe, the greater number being nearly naked, and apparently insensible to the cold, which is wellnigh unbearable to those who are most warmly clothed. Some, indeed, give no further evidence of their folly, than to run thus half naked through all the cabins ; but others are mischievous. Some carry water, or something worse, and throw it at those whom they meet ; others take the fire-brands, coals, and ashes from the fire, and scatter them in all directions, without heeding on whom they fall ; others break the kettles, dishes, and all the little domestic outfit that they find in their path."<sup>3</sup> The Hos of India, who are described as being usually gentle of manner and decorous, hold a religious festival when their granaries are full in January, and then their character seems, for the time, to undergo a total change. They drink immoderately of rice beer, and give vent to the devilry which they say is then in

<sup>1</sup> Roscher : *Lexikon*, 1037 f., 1072, 2252 f. ; Strabo : *Geog.*, X, 3, 7-21 ; Mommsen : *Feste der Stadt Athen in Altertum*, 1898, 354 ff., 428 ff.

<sup>2</sup> E. A. Smith, in *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, for 1880-81 (publ. 1883), pp. 112 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Jesuit Relations*, ed. Thwaites, XLII, 155 ff.

them. Children revile their parents in gross language, which is returned to them again ; and in a general suspension of the usual duties and restraints, the women become like raging Bacchantes, and the men like beasts. And the Múndáris, too, hold at this time a festival in which, with less licentiousness, farm-labourers are feasted by their masters and are allowed the greatest freedom of address.<sup>1</sup> And at other religious festivals in India, notably at the Holi celebration, not only is all manner of mischief permitted (as when red or yellow powder is thrown at one another, or boys squirt red liquid on passers-by), but abusive and obscene language is then given and received without concern.<sup>2</sup> At the *Sakti-puja*, the Abbé Dubois tells us, men and women used to eat and drink to excess everything that is forbidden to a Hindu, even the flesh of the cow ; and all classes, from Brahmins to Pariahs, mingled in one indiscriminate orgy of gluttony, intoxication, and lust.<sup>3</sup> In Ashantee the maturity of the yams in September is a saturnalian time. Theft, intrigue, assault, are committed with impunity, and the grossest passion and indulgence then prevail.<sup>4</sup> With the Wasuahili of eastern Africa the opening of the New Year was formerly an occasion of license. Everyone then did as he pleased ; and if, in settling some ancient grudge a man was found dead next day, no questions were asked about it.<sup>5</sup> Or again, all ordinary restraint may be broken through upon some special occasion, as the death of a prominent man. At a funeral ceremony in Assofoo, witnessed by Bowdich, there was kept up for several days a carnival, with much drinking of palm wine, and firing of guns, and singing and dancing. And

<sup>1</sup> Dalton : *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, 1872, p. 196 f.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson : *Religion of the Hindus*, 1861-62, II, 225 ff., and cf. 240 ff. ; Monier-Williams : *Hinduism*, 1880, p. 182 ; Oldfield : *Sketches from Nipal*, 1880, II, 341 ; Oman : *Brahmans, Theists, and Muslims of India*, 1907, pp. 241 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Dubois : *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies*, tr. Beauchamp, 1897, pp. 288 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Bowdich : *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, 1819, p. 274.

<sup>5</sup> New : *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa*, 1874, p. 65.

when the King died, he was told, the near members of the family acted as though insane, bursting forth into the streets, killing indiscriminately and without punishment.<sup>1</sup> And like excesses were common in Hawaii upon the death of a chief. As soon as he had expired, "the whole neighbourhood exhibited a scene of confusion, wickedness, and cruelty, seldom witnessed even in the most barbarous society. The people ran to and fro without their clothes, appearing and acting more like demons than human beings; every vice was practised, and almost every species of crime perpetrated. Houses were burnt, property plundered, even murder sometimes committed, and the gratification of every base and savage feeling sought without restraint"—a state of affairs which found almost its counterpart among the Society Islanders at 'mourning.'<sup>2</sup>

The causes of these outbursts are not always the same. In some cases, especially among the naïve, there seems to be the far-from-commendable motive that evil is about to be removed, or has been removed, and consequently it does not matter how high the score now goes;<sup>3</sup> like the extravagant expense which may precede or come close upon the clearance of the bankrupt. Again, the joyous excess may come from the thought that the oncoming period of restraint will close the opportunities of pleasure, as in the Carnival preceding Lent—so, *carpe diem!* Or it may be but an emotional rebound from ungrateful limitations; as of sailors first ashore. At times, too, and particularly in conjunction with the season when Nature is coming to fruition, there often is the feeling of sympathetic union with the swelling life around—sometimes from the sense that by excessive indulgence man can assist in bringing on the fullness of Nature, or again with no more reflection than lies in those familiar but hidden motives that make so many men nearer poetry in the spring.

<sup>1</sup> Bowdich : *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, 1819, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> Ellis : *Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii*, 1826, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Frazer : *Golden Bough*, 1900, III, 118 f.

These oscillations of feeling, however, do not seem to be peculiar to religion ; they are, rather, but the reappearance there—though often magnified, because religion goes so deep into character—of the same movements that run through secular life. The American negro shows the same poles of feeling both within and without his religion ; the humour and the pathos of his character but come to the full in the dark anxiety and the jubilation of the camp-meeting. And the joyous festival of Purim, when every Jew was expected to drink until he could no longer distinguish between the words “cursed be Haman” and “blessed be Mordecai,” and when a whole community seemed to have taken leave of its senses, was a festival exactly like those which have often gone with religion, and yet it seems to have been a wholly secular feast.<sup>1</sup> If other analogues in secular life, though mild and faded, were desired, they could still be found upon the night that closes the Old year and brings in the New, even to-day—reminding one of that ‘Lord of Misrule’ who in England reigned during the festivities connected with Christmas and New Year.<sup>2</sup>

But when instead of the recurrent oscillation between religious gloom and joy, the individual or the people shows an abiding inclination to one or the other side, we often may regard it as but a special instance of the ways of evolution, wherein features which farther down the scale are mingled, frequently upon higher levels become distinct and separate. Instead of the mutually opposing tendencies working together or in rapid succession in the same person, different individuals seem now elected to exemplify in relative isolation the one or the other strain.

It has been pointed out by others that the tendency to be cheerful or morose is not always to be explained by any special turn of external fortune. Often there appears to be some difference in the mental or nervous constitution which

<sup>1</sup> Frazer : *Golden Bough*, 1900, III, 159, 157.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers : *Book of Days*, 1866, II, 741 f.



brings out unlike responses to situations that are like. It is well known that quite apart from any legitimate occasion for cheer or depression—such as great achievement and honour, or misfortune to one's self or friends—some men persistently see things dark or rose-hued. Extreme and painful instances of the kind are often found among the insane, who following some inner prompting, and regardless of their real condition, may show either exaltation or melancholy. And for them the whole world may then be seen consistent with the emotion dominating them: for the depressed there is nothing but faithlessness and persecution; for the opposite type perhaps riches and royal rank. There is here some inner and undiscovered process, reminding us of a similar though often less permanent influence of certain drugs, some of them stimulant, others depressant, bringing as the case may be, glorious visions or horror and black despair. Doubtless these inclinations which appear thus irresistible in mental disease or as an effect of drugs are gently present even in mental health. But the outward occasions of the opposing mood are, with us, usually strong enough to prevent the appearance of its opposite, unabated and in sole strength; thus life for most men is a mingling of joy with disappointment.

Now it seems probable that whole groups of kindred people, quite as truly as occasional individuals, have some such inner determinant of mood. And this would help to explain the presence of religious gloom among some and of cheer with others, the almost ethnic displays of sadness and of hope. For it is evident that with whole orders of a society the ideal may act mainly as a stimulant, or again as a depressant; and the cause must lie, at least in part, in some difference of the constitution of the human spirit.

If such a difference exists, it must find ample occasion and encouragement for either gloom or cheer in the very frame of the Ideal. For this itself, even in the well-balanced character, at once occasions warring states of mind. The heights of living are apt both to enhearten and bring de-

jection. For there is then perceived the Perfect, stretching on beyond the limits of sight, and calling forward to possession ; but in the same moment comes the condemning sense that life has all the while remained far from its true desire. And moreover, every movement forward seems in its issue a less distinct attainment of the good than had been hoped ; so that high-hearted attempt and a sense of partial failure are bound up in the experience of devotion to the Best. This noble depression, or tempered exultation, can easily in less steadied minds pass into a religion that is either morbid or effervescent. And whole peoples, according to their disposition, may so regard the Divine that for them its greatest power will be either check or cheer. It is no great step from these opposites of feeling to those of flight from the world, and of cheerful acceptance, which have already been before us ; and of the far-off and the near Ideal, which are to come. What is here said of gloom and cheer may accordingly serve at least to make these other topics appear less indistinct.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SUPPRESSION AND INTENSIFYING OF EMOTION

MAN is not simply impassive or else stirred with emotion; he comes to recognize emotion itself as something toward which a hostile or a friendly attitude must be assumed. A value is thus set upon the stir of feeling, and men consciously seek to rid themselves of all excitement or to heighten what they already have. There thus comes into existence a religious culture directly concerned with emotion, and more often intended to arouse than to quiet it.

And first of all, the culture of religious feeling is not something entirely indirect. It would be wrong to say that certain emotions first come to be regarded as having a place in divinity, and then are cultivated by the worshipper who patterns himself after his god. For the cultivation of emotion appears in the rudest savagery, and seems as primitive as the idea of divinity itself; and these cultivated emotions are not themselves copied from the gods, nor are they felt to be characteristic of the gods. And again, certain emotions are ascribed to the gods when these divinities are not regarded as offering a pattern for human conduct. With this word of warning that we are not attempting to set forth the order of evolution and to say that first the qualities are projected into heaven and then intently sought on earth, we may see what are the feelings with which divinity is endowed.

The philosophic idea that God is pure Reason, or pure Intellect, is natural to those who from their own exclusive interest in thought, regard the intellect as the only part

of us that has real worth. But this view has taken no deep hold upon the unspoiled man. With him, the plain human feelings, often strengthened and become heroic, have as central a place in the divine life as have perception or intelligence. Zeus is represented as deeply interested in the welfare of those dear to him, angered by Olympian plots, petulant with his spouse, in love with many a woman both mortal and immortal. Agni of the Vedas is a kindly god; Ilâ, Sarasvatî, and Mahî are "comfort-giving goddesses, they who do not fail."<sup>1</sup> The Jehovah of the Hebrews is jealous of the Gentile gods, and angry toward those of his people who turn to them. But he is also merciful; he does not deal with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities; he will not continue his anger for ever. As a father hath compassion on his sons, so Jehovah hath compassion on us.<sup>2</sup> Some of the gods of ancient Mexico were felt to delight in the agonies of tortured victims. And among the gods of other primitive peoples we find all shades of the emotional life from the fiercest passion to indifference.

But turning from the feelings of the gods to the feelings that were deliberately sought by the worshipper, one cannot but think, first of all, of that Pity which is so prominent with the Buddhist—pity so deep and wide that it reaches not only from man up to the very gods, but downward from man to all the forms of life below. As early as 400 A.D. the Chinese traveller Fahian found, at Pâtaliputra, hospitals for the sick and poor, especially for the strangers who came there for religious festivals. And philanthropy was early widened until it became a compassion for all forms of life; even the animal hospital being early known. Part of the equipment of the disciple who took the Buddhist vows was, along with the bowl for alms, and the rosary, a sieve through which the drinking water should be strained, lest even insect life should be destroyed.<sup>3</sup> Among certain

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, I, 13, 9 (XLVI, 8); V, 5, 8 (XLVI, 377).

<sup>2</sup> Psalm CIII; cf. Briggs: *Book of Psalms*, 1907, p. 324 f.

<sup>3</sup> de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, pp. 609, 620 f.



sects of the Orient, however, the master virtue was not so much pity as an emotion more akin to love. In a portion of the literature of the East there is presented a religious idea called *Bhakti*, an affectionate devotion which is neither knowledge nor external action. The forms of this love, or devotion, include, beside peaceful contemplation and slavish submission, the more clearly affectionate forms—friendship, childlike attachment, and the fiery love as between man and woman.<sup>1</sup> The question that has been raised, whether the conception of *Bhakti* is not of Christian origin,<sup>2</sup> need not concern us here, because the thought of *Bhakti* itself, whether original or adopted, shows in either case a responsiveness to an ideal that stands in contrast to that spirit which regards all feeling as an earthy clog upon the soul.

The West, with its greater respect for woman and for her love, has in general been less fearful than have the higher religions of the Orient, of admitting a passionate affection and not a mere *amor intellectualis* as a means of union with divinity. In Christianity the Love that is made to lie in the very heart of God himself, as revealed in his Son, is the foundation-virtue for all his worshippers: "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."<sup>3</sup> "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you."<sup>4</sup> "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren."<sup>5</sup> And it is certain that in the West, where the forces that tend to dissolve society are so strong, and men, as compared with the common mass of the Orient, seem to be for the most part more self-reliant, more individual—in the West especially there was urgent need that the binding force of love should thus receive encouragement.

But in speaking of the cultivation of feeling<sup>1</sup> we ought not to overlook the rare occurrence in religion of the very opposite trend—where the ideal character is entirely with-

<sup>1</sup> de la Saussaye, p. 646.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 658.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians, XIII, 13.

<sup>4</sup> John, XV, 12.

<sup>5</sup> 1 John, III, 14.

out feeling, and where the aim is to approach as far as possible that philosophic ideal of a passionless existence, which, as was said, takes no general hold of men. In the religion of the Bhagavadgîtâ, pure indifference is given the highest praise. To the divinity none is hateful, none dear ; and he is highest who thinks alike about friends and enemies, about the good and the sinful.<sup>1</sup> And again, "The wise look upon a Brâhmâna possessed of learning and humility, on a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a Svapâka"—one of the very lowest caste—"as alike."<sup>2</sup> Yet even here there is no entire consistency ; for the true follower is expected to be, not indifferent in all ways, but to be "intent on the welfare of all beings" and to hope for "Brahmic bliss." There is to be indifference *in* the Ideal but not *to* the Ideal. Indeed, the divinity declares himself to be "dear above all things" to the man of knowledge, "and he is dear to me." Many are noble, "but the man possessed of knowledge is deemed by me to be my own self."<sup>3</sup> Such an ideal is perhaps unimpassioned, but it is only waveringly unfeeling—unfeeling and indifferent to all the particulars of actual life, but not indifferent to the eternal One.

But in addition to fostering some special quality in the life of feeling, as a permanent good, there appears in religion the thought that the divine presence in man is manifested tempestuously, by a lack of the usual control of mind and body. The Cumæan Sibyl raves as she gives the inspired word ; her look, her colour change ; her hair becomes dishevelled, and her bosom heaves with the growing madness.<sup>4</sup> At the temple of the Moon, near Iberia, in the country of the Albanians in ancient times, there were sacred attendants, many of whom were thought to be divinely inspired and to prophesy. And if the holy frenzy became especially violent in some one of them, driving him away to the woods, he was caught and bound with sacred fetters, and maintained sumptuously for all the

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, VI (VIII, 68).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VII (VIII, 75).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, V (VIII, 65).

<sup>4</sup> Vergil : *Æneid*, VI, 46 ff.

year ; and at a festival in honour of the goddess he, as having been specially marked by the divinity, was anointed and sacrificed to her.<sup>1</sup> The divinity was believed by the Gonds of India to come upon man in madness. In November the whole village assembled at the shrine of Ghansyám Deo, protector of the crops. There, after a sacrifice of fowls, or a pig, the god descends upon the head of one of the worshippers, who is suddenly seized with a kind of fit, and, after staggering about, rushes off into the wildest parts of the jungle. Men are sent to bring him back, lest he die a maniac and starving ; and even after his return he does not regain his senses for a day or two.<sup>2</sup> And in the initiatory rites of the Winnebagoes, by which men and women gain the mysterious power known as ' medicine,' this power is not assured them until, in the midst of the rites, the candidates, struck down as by an electric shock, fall on their faces, their limbs extended, their muscles rigid and quivering.<sup>3</sup>

Often, under this conviction that excitement is a sign of the supernatural, if not of divine power, there comes a deliberate arousal of stormy feeling, as a special means of communion with the gods. And to this end various excitants are employed.

Among such excitants, intoxicating drinks are often used. Indians in Virginia initiated their choicest young men by carrying them to the woods and confining them there for several months, and giving them as their only nourishment a drink made from certain poisonous roots. By this they became " stark, staring mad," and were kept in this raving condition eighteen or twenty days. Gradually they were permitted to return to sanity, but not until they had been brought back to the village " still wild and crazy," and tested to make sure that all remembrance of their former life had been destroyed. Such complete erasure

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, XI, 4, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Panjab Notes and Queries*, II, 54 (Dec., 1884).

<sup>3</sup> Fletcher, in Schoolcraft : *Archives of Aborig. Knowl.*, 1860, III, 287.

of the old was thought to render them especially fit for public service.<sup>1</sup> Tribes in the Gulf States and in the region thereabout have made a somewhat similar use of the 'black drink,' which produces nervous disturbance, and a disordered imagination, connected by the Indians with spiritual power.<sup>2</sup> In Peru, the priests whose special office it was to converse with the gods of towns or provinces, were accustomed to produce in themselves ecstasy by a narcotic drink called 'tonca'; and while in this ecstatic state it was believed they were inspired.<sup>3</sup>

Everyone knows of the drunkenness from wine so prominent in the worship of Dionysos. And farther east, drinks were an important part of worship. Pliny tells of a plant found on the banks of the Indus, which, in drink, brought on delirium and strange visions; and of an infusion of 'theangelis,' which gave to the Magi powers of divination.<sup>4</sup> And from many other sources we know that in Persia and in India much use was made of a drink called Haoma or Soma, offered to the gods and partaken also by men, and honoured until it became itself an object of adoration. It is placed in honour along with the sacred Word and the holy Zarathustra! Zarathustra's wife prayed him for the "good narcotic" that she might think and speak and act according to the law.<sup>5</sup> And again, "Homage unto Haoma, because all other drinks are attended with Aêshma, the fiend of the wounding spear," but the drinking of Haoma is attended with divinities of blessing and of heavenly order.<sup>6</sup> Its holy power of virtue and inspiration was praised also in a special hymn which recounts all the wonders it does for men.<sup>7</sup>

But drugs used for religious excitation need not be taken in the form of drink. Roman (or Ramon) Pane, "a poor

<sup>1</sup> Beverley: *History of Virginia* (repr. of ed. of 1722), 1855, pp. 162 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Amer. Ethnol., Bulletin 30, 1907, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Rivero and Tschudi: *Peruvian Antiquities*, Engl. by Hawks, 1853, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> *Nat. Hist.*, XXIV, 102. <sup>5</sup> Din Yast, V, 15 (XXIII, 267 f. and note).

<sup>6</sup> Ashi Yast, II, 5 (XXIII, 271).

<sup>7</sup> Hôrn Yast (XXXI, 231 ff.).



anchorite of the order of St. Jerome" and possessed of knowledge of certain Indian ways, tells us that, when one is sick, the doctor to whom the sick man is taken must snuff "a certain powder, called cohoba, up his nose, which makes him drunk, that he knows not what he does." In this condition the priest says many extravagant things, which the Indians believe is his conversation with the spirits who are telling him how the sickness came about. This 'cohoba' was perhaps tobacco,<sup>1</sup> and again was used in special rites to these same spirits. Here a branched cane was clapped to the nostrils, and a mass of the powder inhaled, until the worshippers were "beside themselves," and uttered words "which none of our people understand."<sup>2</sup>

But there were other forms of drugging which were regarded by the Indians as means of communication with the spiritual world. At initiation into an order in Guiana, which had to do with religion, or at least with sorcery, the candidate was dosed to extremity with tobacco juice, since tobacco was esteemed a sacred plant by them as by other Indians.<sup>3</sup> The Iroquois believed they could not gain the ear of the Great Spirit unless their petitions were sent up with a cloud of burning tobacco<sup>4</sup>—whose virtue as incense in prayer was doubtless suggested by the intoxication of its thick fumes and their employment for divination and inspired dreams.<sup>5</sup> The custom here was in many respects like that of the Scythians in one of their purification rites: gathered in a close-drawn tent of felt, on the floor of which were red-hot stones, they threw hemp seed upon these, while the men inhaled the thickening fumes until they fairly shouted in their intoxication.<sup>6</sup> This narcotic effect

<sup>1</sup> See the quotation from Oviedo, in Wilson: *Prehistoric Man*, 1865, pp. 323 f.

<sup>2</sup> In *Life of Columbus*, by his Son; Pinkerton's *Voyages*, 1812, XII, 85 and 79; cf. the powdered 'curupa' and the flowers of the *floripondio* used by the Omaguas to produce extraordinary visions, spoken of by Condamine, in Pinkerton's *Voyages*, XIV, 226.

<sup>3</sup> Edw. Bancroft: *Natural History of Guiana*, 1769, p. 316.

<sup>4</sup> Morgan: *League of the Iroquois*, 1851, p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson: *Prehistoric Man*, 1865, pp. 315 f., 323 f.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, IV, 73 ff., and cf. I, 202.

of hemp, or hashish, and of opium, is still sought by the Persian dervishes, who regard as holy the ecstasy produced.<sup>1</sup>

Extreme stimulation by drugs is thus, upon the lower stages of religion, quite widely valued as a means of approach to the world of spirits. The effect of these stimulants, which to us seems something natural and physiological, appeared to these religionists to be mysterious and supernatural. The life of divinity was felt to be present in the plant or fruit ; and by taking this into his own body, the worshipper became ' possessed ' of the spiritual power there resident. Indeed, it is conceivable that the custom of eating the divinity in animal or human form<sup>2</sup> in order to obtain spiritual power or protection may have had, if not its origin, at least its great encouragement, in the illumination which came of partaking of intoxicating plants. The exciting influence here is pointed and unmistakable, and is at once recognized by early man as a supernatural mark of the plant ; and a high and mysterious influence is felt to be transferred from the plant to the man into whom the plant has entered. From this, by analogy, the belief could easily be strengthened that any spirit in animals, too, whether divine or demonic, could similarly be received by him who ate. But however this may be, the fact is clear that from various vegetable drugs some vision was caught of a strange world ; the seal of reality was given to a region quite apart from the one habitual to the eyes. It is not then surprising that the savage, and even those far higher than the savage, should regard these devices as important aids to worship. They aided reverence or communication by their exciting power, for this excitement was, by preparation and intent, given a direction toward the world of spirits. And in return, the associations, the actual contents which the mind received in the excitement, as well as the mere stir itself, sealed the experience as religious.

<sup>1</sup> Tylor : *Primitive Culture*, 1903, II, 418 ff. ; cf. Bastian : *Der Mensch in der Geschichte*, 1860, II, 152 ff., for a general view of the use of narcotics in worship, divination, magic, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Frazer : *Golden Bough*, 1900, II, 318 ff.

And doubtless in some similar way we might find a crude and sorry reasonableness in other practices which seem to us at a pole directly opposite to real religion. The obscene rites which Herodotus records in connection with Babylonian worship,<sup>1</sup> and which from other sources are known to have been connected with worship in many lands—these were viewed as means to a near approach to the divinity through those who were her representatives in the flesh. There is a hidden idea of sacrifice here, of offering what is of value to the worshipper and seems to be desired of the god or goddess. But such rites may be regarded as, in part at least, rites of excitation and of communion,<sup>2</sup> especially when, as sometimes happens, the licentiousness is permitted only after a period of prolonged denial. At these strange occasions of emotional storm, coming, as they often did, in the temple and in the very presence of divinity, it must have seemed to many of the time impious to look too critically, or to regard them as anything unholy. These unseemly methods are neither in their savage theory nor in their actual psychic results, entirely unlike the use of drugs which we have just considered.

Nor are they entirely unlike the long-continued dancing and leaps which so frequently have a place among the inducements of religious fervour. The importance of the dance in the rites of the American Indians is generally known—one need but mention the Bull, or Buffalo, dance of the Mandans<sup>3</sup> and related tribes, the Corn dance of the Iroquois, the Ghost dance which spread so remarkably from the Paiutes, and the many dances named from Snake and Sun and Scalp and Calumet.<sup>4</sup> But dances are by no means confined to American soil or to exactly such occasions. In Guiana the priest or sorcerer was prepared for his office by

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, I, 199.

<sup>2</sup> For an entirely different view of the motives in this feature of religion, see the chapter on the subject in Sumner: *Folkways*, 1907.

<sup>3</sup> Vividly described by Catlin: *North American Indians*, 1842, I, 164 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau Amer. Ethnol., Bulletin 30, 1907, pt. I, pp. 381 f., 491 f.

violent dancing and fasting and drugging, continued over several days ; when he fell to the ground as dead, he was artificially revived, and the rite continued with such severity that the mental and nervous disturbance in him was extreme.<sup>1</sup> And among the Alfurus of Celebes, wild waving of arms and dancing and leaping by the priests, in successive shifts day and night for many days, were part of the means and outer evidence of the presence of the god ; until at the end the head priest fell senseless and as though dead.<sup>2</sup> The mental effect of such movements of the body upon the actor and the spectator is most marked, especially when there is added to the native influence of these movements the effect of a strained effort of the mind to surpass its common limits, and of a sympathetic crowd all bent upon receiving some influx from a higher source. Then strong men fall down as dead, overpowered by the spirit for whom the rites are celebrated ; and in the tumult the limits are no longer felt which divide common life from the supernatural. Stripped of its barbarity and softened, the nobler elements of these older methods have been continued in the solemn movements of the choral dance, in the stately march, in the rhythm of music which carries the body quietly and unconsciously into the music's cadence. The silent effect of mere recurrence which is so potent a feature in the dance may be felt when movement is no longer markedly present—in the refrain of the hymn, or in the impressive repetition in the sacred litany.<sup>3</sup>

Thus when peoples become more civil, they either refine or cast away entirely the religious instruments which savagery employs. Yet they do not cease to seek excitement as a means of approach to God. The unsettling influence of continued solitude, especially when to it are joined fasting and want of sleep, has already been pointed out ; but there are effective means to accomplish much the

<sup>1</sup> Meiners : *Geschichte der Religionen*, 1807, II, 162.

<sup>2</sup> Bastian : *Der Mensch*, 1860, II, 145.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. the refrains in various parts of the Zend-Avesta ; and in the *Book of the Dead*, XV, and LXXI.



same end, without hermitage or privation. Great assemblies, with singing and exhortation, are well-known methods of arousing feeling, especially in connection with 'revivals' of religion. Often there are evident proofs of the pitch to which the excitement here may run—uncontrollable shouting, violent bodily movements (giving us the popular terms 'Quaker' and 'Shaker'), passing often into a state of complete insensibility. And one of the notable features of such meetings, and an evidence of their power, is that persons who feel hatred or contempt for the wild behaviour of those about them, and who are in a frame of mind far from reverent, may be utterly unable to keep themselves from the wildest extravagance.<sup>1</sup> The prostrations and impressive inner experiences which occur at the religious gatherings of savages as well as among more advanced people are evidence that such seizures are not confined to any one religion. Thus it is apparent that the rise of religious feeling is not wholly dependent either on society or on solitude; but can be brought to pass in many ways. Doubtless there are temperaments that are most easily aroused by the direct and present influence of companions, while others find themselves resistant to such contagion and can best concentrate their thought upon the unseen when all alone. Especially when the intellectual element becomes stronger and the revelation is nobler, the illumination seems more apt to come to the solitary. There is no suggestion of the revival excitement of the crowd, in the Book of the Monk of Evesham, or in the Revelation of St. John, or in the writings of Swedenborg. "Be much alone," said Buddha to his disciples; and the great enlightenment is said to have come to him in solitude, under the sacred tree, as it first came to Mohammed upon a lonely mountain, or to Moses far away, watching the flocks of Jethro. The great leaders of religion are reached in solitude; the followers are more stirred by the company of men.

<sup>1</sup> For a number of instances see Davenport: *Primit. Traits in Relig. Revivals*, 1905, pp. 79 f., 84, 150, 154, 226.

But the 'revival' itself is by no means a simple matter ; and cannot be fully understood by viewing it as a mere device for attaining communion through tempestuous feeling ; it is not all a deliberate means, it is also with many a natural expression of the religious life. Such a life, rarely maintaining a constant level, is apt to have its ebb and flow ; and thus the revival is not alone the stimulant for the restoration of the spiritually 'dead,' but it is in part the unpremeditated expression of a return-wave of feeling. In the revival we have feeling artificially worked up ; and also feeling working itself up and out. Thus we may see feeling and emotion, not simply as a means, nor as an end or ideal. It is now a spontaneous utterance or expression of the deep and hidden movements of the mind. In addition to the various forms of expression already seen, there are some further modes of expressing emotion to which we should perhaps now attend.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WIDER CONNECTIONS OF FEELING

THE utterance of emotion in religion may occur in many ways, and by no means appears only in what is called 'emotionalism.' The stir of religious life may often be seen in a quickened and redirected intellectual interest, moving toward underlying ends that are permanent; or it may appear in more generous and energetic practical activity; or in a closer attachment to the ecclesiastical exercises of religion.

It seems to be true that with us emotionalism in religion is often characteristic of those sects that disparage ceremonial—as if there were a repugnance between ritual and excitement. Perhaps more than a single cause is here at work; but explanation is near when we remember that ceremonial implies a certain law and order. It stands, at least with us, although not always with the savage, for decorum and a kind of courtly etiquette, having respect for due forms. There is here a restraint upon impulsive expression, and this restraint becomes irksome to those whose religious feelings seek free play. But ritual itself is, for some, just the fitting symbol and expression of their feeling, giving it a visible form which is at once its life and its restraint. The very moderation of great ceremonial serves not only as a quiet and strong excitant, but brings with it a true *katharsis* of religious feeling. The emotion is repeatedly aroused and drawn away before it mounts so high as to sweep all continence aside. The stormier expression is less common among ritualists therefore, not

alone because the passionate have come out from among them, but because the impressive ceremonial by its order can school and repress wildness.

But in viewing the expression of religious feeling it would be impossible to overlook the connection of it with art. Indeed, ceremonial which often begins in magic, soon drops this character, and looks to the expressiveness of the act. And into this there soon enters the element of beauty. The fair appearance which seems so appropriate to all that is connected with the service of divinity is our mute testimony to the impression which God makes upon the heart. Beauty is our name for that which in the outer object fascinates the spirit, but which cannot well be classed as Truth or as Good-will. And when God is regarded as the sum of all perfections it becomes natural to speak of the Divine Beauty, and to supplement the sincerity and the benevolence of our service to God, by making all that is offered him, whether it be of act or of object, to have the grace of Art. The words that are uttered in the service, then, must have fitness of form; they must have dignity, as well as truth. The pleasure of verse and of music and of stately movement is thus a free decoration of sacred speech; they testify to the feeling that is joined with the ideas. The solemn procession and the rich symbols carried, the rare vestments, the incense, the noble figures stained in glass, the paintings and chiselled forms upon the walls, the massive temple itself into which may have gone the genius of generations—these are among the modes in which humanity expresses its devotion to the unseen. All that on earth seems close to beauty is fitly gathered into the service of the church, not only to stamp upon men's hearts the image of the Divine, but to express the depth of feeling with which man pays his vows to the Ideal. No man can paint or sing or build eminently what he does not value. And since religion is the very sphere in which we state what for us has supreme worth, it is also the great occasion for the creation of beauty. In the cathedrals of England and the Continent, in the paint-



ings of Italy, in the temples of ancient Rome and Athens, in the great religious songs of Homer and of the North, reverence shows itself to be a nurse and mother of art. Thus all that art produces in the service of religion—whether it be in literature, or music, or painting, or architecture—may be viewed as a part of the expression which men have given of their religious feeling.

But as in art, so in other regions, it is impossible nicely to separate the feelings that are religious from those that are of the world. And the likeness and connection between religious and secular feelings is shown not only in the fact that the feelings that men have toward God are the very same feelings, though enlarged and purified, which they have toward the most significant of mundane things ; but also, in that the self-same functions which the feelings have in religion, they are found to have also in earthly affairs. The state, the family, the ordinary intercourse with men, become, each in its own measure, centres of activities in which feeling can be viewed either as an outward evidence of what is underneath, or as an inner hidden spring, or a temporary expedient, or a permanent ideal. In the value attached to patriotism as a constant sentiment, or to affection in the family, we have the counterpart of the value set on religious feeling. And the needs of the state are the frequent occasion of devices to stir men to the depths. The celebration of its special anniversaries with pomp and circumstance, the outer honours attached to its officials, the suggestion of power and beauty in its public buildings, are ways of influencing and expressing the sentiments grouped around earthly government. The tempests of sectarian strife are paralleled by the clash of parties, all true and loyal it may be to the one rule, according to their light, but each profoundly suspicious of the integrity and intelligence of its rivals. Especially in America does the 'revival' find a distant analogue in the 'campaign' with its elaborate machinery for arousing and keeping awake an interest in the party programme. But under it all there is

often in men a devotion to the State, a readiness to give up all and defend its honour even to the death, a readiness for the still more difficult sacrifice that goes with lifelong publicity—which makes it not wholly unworthy to compare the feelings of patriotism with those of religion.

But even in more minute details the connection between religious and secular feeling appears. The contagious character of religious excitement, where men, though unconvinced, may be carried along powerless as in a flood, is also present at times of financial panic, or in political fury like that of the French Revolution. And the belief that religious emotionalism springs from a general readiness to impulsive violence and disorder, apart from religion, gains some support if a recent student is correct who believes that the counties of Kentucky which have been the seat of great revivals have also been the scene of unusually frequent lynching.<sup>1</sup> As we go to still more primitive life, we find, too, that the means which are employed for stirring religious feeling are also used for purposes that do not clearly have a religious character. The Mandrucus of Brazil discovered murderers by dreams brought on through narcotic drinks ; while certain Indians of California gave narcotics to their children in order that through them a knowledge might be had of the movements of the enemy. And in a similar way, when the Darien Indians wished to find hidden treasure they used certain seeds to bring on delirium in children, that from these some clue might be obtained.<sup>2</sup> The secular parallel to uses that often have religious significance is also found in a practice of the ancient Persians : “ It is their custom,” writes Herodotus, “ to consult upon affairs of greatest moment when they are drunk. But on the following day when they are sober ”—rare prudence!—“ the master of the house where the council was held lays before them the decision they had reached. And now if in sobriety,

<sup>1</sup> Davenport : *Primit. Traits in Relig. Revivals*, 1905, pp. 301 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Tylor : *Primitive Culture*, 1903, II, 417. Maury : *La magie et l'astrologie*, 1864, p. 425, note.

too, they favour it, the plan is finally adopted ; otherwise they lay it aside." At times, however, with the Persians, the order is reversed : a preliminary decision reached soberly is reviewed in wine.<sup>1</sup> Under the mellowing influence of beer the ancient Germans, likewise, opened their hearts to one another and discussed affairs of family or of state ; but the judgments so arrived at had to be reviewed subsequently in the light of common day.<sup>2</sup> The fantastic as well as the more common uses which excitement has found in the service of religion seem thus to be but part of a wide and general application of practices that have commended themselves to men whenever matters of importance were afoot.

But if the place which feeling holds in religion is not peculiar to religion, are the feelings themselves at all distinctive ? It has already been indicated that the discrimination between religious and secular feelings is exceedingly difficult. It is probable that there is no important difference in their grosser quality, though there may often be in their strength and finer shading, since the religious feelings are those of the weightiest and noblest secular association, but slightly changed by being directed now to situations that exceed the bounds of common life. The goodness, the beauty, the intelligence, found in God arouse the kind of sentiment that is stirred in us by goodness, beauty, and intelligence found on earth. The feelings of religion gain the peculiarity they seem to have, not so much from their own inherent quality, as from the total mental state in which they come. For this total mental state is distinctive, but mainly because its centre is occupied by objects that belong to a higher realm. Religion is a redirection of the highest feelings, but toward an uncustomary, a supreme end. And religion in employing such terms as ' King,' and ' Lord,' and ' Friend,' and ' Son,' and ' Father ' in our relation to the Supreme, does thereby testify that the feelings which

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, I, 133.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus : *Germania*, XXII.

appear in human relations are also, at their best, appropriate to the Divine.

In its higher forms, however, religion makes use, not of all feelings indiscriminately, but preferably of those that have proved to be best for the larger social needs. The selfish feelings, for example, the vindictive, and some of the more passionate emotions which are freely admitted as proper to the religions of less cultivated people are utterly condemned by those of better training. The personal profit of God's service is not without its emotional appeal far above savagery. But when it is seen that the feelings of self-seeking can usually take care of themselves, while the generous sentiments in comparison look colourless and stunted, religion in search of the ideal of character and of life feels especial need of encouraging the generous, the unselfish emotions. If men of themselves came already rich in these, and were in danger of losing character by lack of interest in their private fortune, high religion might find more occasion for laying emphasis upon this other side. It is only rarely that we find instances where excessive generosity, unbalanced by provision for replenishing one's own private store, seems to have left the personal character bloodless and no longer able to be of help.

The absence of one particular feeling from the company of religious sentiments is notable. In sacred literature humour comes but seldom, as if religion would not permit even historical narrative that came into the sphere of piety to be dealt with otherwise than soberly. Yet it is not entirely wanting. There has been a recent attempt to make probable a smile behind some of the sayings of Jesus. And grim humour is perhaps in the exclamation of the Koran: "Give to the hypocrites the glad tidings that for them is grievous woe!"<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, too, there is some appreciation of the absurdity of the situation when the false emissaries played their trick on Joshua—making themselves dusty and tattered and torn, having but a

<sup>1</sup> Ch. IV (VI, 91).



remnant of provisions dry and mouldy, as though they had come an interminable journey, when in fact they were from the very neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup> There seems to be a touch of humour, too, in that incident in the Confucian canon where a wife anxious to do honour to her deceased lord plans with her chief officer to bury with her husband a living person to do him service in the lower world. Having perhaps some misgiving, however, they tell the deceased man's brother of their plan, who offers the opinion that such an action would be inappropriate. But if it must be done, he adds dryly, the wife and chief officer of the deceased are undoubtedly the proper ones to be sacrificed, since they alone could give the attendance due in illness or in need; whereupon the wife and chief officer apparently lost interest in the plan.<sup>2</sup> The scandalous discomfiture of the Olympian gods, that must have been greeted with loud laughter by earlier hearers of the Homeric tales, came unpleasantly to more sensitive Athenian ears. These earlier tales bring one nearer to the more primitive religious feeling, where, as with children, the passage from gravity to laughter is lightly made. Chamisso tells us that in an interlude of the great festival of the 'Morai' which he attended, on one of the Hawaiian Islands, there was used a fierce-looking idol, decked with feathers and real teeth. When two youths brought the image closer to Chamisso for him to see it, he began to feel the teeth of the god; whereupon one of the young men gave the figure a sudden movement that made it swallow Chamisso's hand; he quickly drew his hand back, and then arose immoderate laughter. And in general the gaiety which prevailed at this festival, he says, would have made the gaiety of a European masquerade seem like a funeral.<sup>3</sup> Such conduct, and especially such use of a sacred image, would hardly have seemed fitting even for an interlude with peoples more advanced. Thus later we find that fun and religion are regarded as anti-

<sup>1</sup> Joshua, IX.

<sup>2</sup> Li Ki, II, 2, 2, 15 (XXVII, 181 f.).

<sup>3</sup> *Reise um die Welt*, in Chamisso's Werke, 1852, I, 174 ff.

podes ; and the natural attitude is well reflected in the Koran, where nothing worse can be said of the Infidels than that they "have taken their religion for a play and a sport." "For them is a drink of boiling water, and grievous woe for that they have misbelieved."<sup>1</sup> After it has disappeared from the human side of religion, laughter, which is a sign close to humour, may still be attributed to the gods, as a natural indication of the divine superiority and secure power, in Virgil and Homer and the Jewish scriptures.

There are several reasons for this gradual suppression of humour and play in religion that has become refined. In the first place its increasing rarity may be distantly connected with the passing of cruelty in the gods. For humour is a pale and altered shade of cruelty, and is kindred to repartee, to teasing, and to all that enjoyment which depends on the degradation or discomfiture of others. The savage takes pleasure in torture and actual killing ; and he often believes his gods to take like pleasure. The civilized man prefers that suffering appear rather in mimic representation or tale, than actually ; and especially that it should seem to be required in the defence and vindication of some great purpose. But the child and the savage and the barbarian of the cities, wanting such compunctions, will gladly look upon agony present to the eyes. And as tragedy is sublimated suffering, so humour is suffering still many degrees more attenuated in that in every way the situation is of less moment and the conceived suffering of others is most mild. But in any event humour, even when we call it kindly, seems to have affinity with the ungenerous emotions and tends to be suppressed with them. And moreover, when circumstances are heavy on the mind, humour can occur only in the rarest characters. Lincoln, bowed down with care when a nation's very existence was in the balance, yet with his comic anecdotes, is an instance the very opposite of typical. Religion, which is the realm where decisions of eternal weight are made, when life and

<sup>1</sup> Ch. VI (VI, 123).

death in this world and in the next are being settled, is no occasion for most men to joke. Even the relief that religion brings to the downcast soul is too fateful to be taken lightly. And thus humour, in which there is a certain irresponsibility, an aloofness from the most useful sympathetic bond, a feeling of security in one's self and of superiority to the petty trials of other men, is inevitably crowded into the background by the solemnity and sense of dependence and community of fortune present in great religion. Where in the commoner states of mind we can enjoy the incongruity and tangle and discord just because it is so petty, religion sees the incongruity of life as momentous. The discord has now become sin and evil, and there is no place for play. Laughter here would be as inappropriate as in a court when sentence of death or liberty was being read; or when men appeared before their sovereign, or were in the charge of battle.

But in noting the suppression of humour in high religion one is already close to another question. Of what effect and influence is feeling; and of what value is it in religion?

Upon this men show the widest possible conflict of opinion, feeling being viewed by some as the chief if not the sole constituent of religion; while others deny it any rightful place. Such divergence is, in the main, not to be changed by science in its present state; for the question involved is not entirely one of fact, but of intention—a dispute not so much whether feeling has been and still is actually present in religion, as whether it should be permitted to remain, or should now be frowned upon as having outlived its use. The ideal religion for those who would discountenance feeling is of the intellect, or of unimpassioned purpose, or of these conjoined. The very interest of the problem urges one to examine closely the place of feeling in reverent life.

And first of all, feeling affects deeply not our conduct only, but our beliefs. The influence of feeling has been the

topic of several chapters that have preceded. There it has perhaps been made clear that men vary immeasurably in their emotional plan and elevation—in their feelings towards themselves, their fellows, and the world at large, viewing these with attraction and repulsion, and with a spirit enlivened or subdued. And these differences of attitude do not remain without effect, but have important consequences in conduct and in the ideals to which men give allegiance and which control them. The man that feels nothing but revulsion toward himself, or toward both himself and other men, who despairs of goodness and would renounce the world, will have his manner of conduct influenced by this feeling. His morality will not be the same as that of the sympathetic. But not only this ; his heaven, if he look to one, will be a different heaven ; his God, a different God. The great objects of a religion are thus given form and colour by the feeling of men, especially in great groups. It need not, of course, make these influences seem less potent if we say that they are for the most part not felt as shaping the ideal, but rather as shaped entirely by it.

But in speaking of the feelings as a determinant of one's view and conduct, it is possible to go still deeper. For feeling is not simply a mould of thought and action ; it enters more intimately into their constitution. For few would regard a mind as religious, though it were penetrating and panoramic even of the divine realm, if it were wholly without preference, without appreciation. The eyes that looked with indifference on all things would be without morality, for right and wrong would be alike, as for the Brahm described by Emerson ; such eyes would be without loyalty to the Best, for there would be no best, no worst. The value of things may be to some extent conventional and due to a settled judgment that has grown up among men about us, whose opinion we coldly imitate. But the settled judgment, for example, that men are more important than stocks and stones, and that honour and truth are worthier than lies and treachery, would never have come about if



there had nowhere been a difference of feeling with regard to such things. Upon the feelings of liking and dislike depends preference ; upon preference depends at last the worth or value which objects shall have. And our regard, our loyalty, our reverence, are but our expression in most solemn form of the worth and value which for us lies somewhere in the universe. These feelings would not of themselves give us the world of preferences and aversions which each of us bears with him, since perception and thought and attention are also needed before we possess this world. Thus feeling is no more fundamental for seeing the world—even the world we worship—than is cognition ; but it is no less fundamental. For interest and attention, which are so essential for the intellectual view, are only in half measure processes of pure knowledge ; the other and inseparable half is feeling. And since the existence of religion implies at least that some goal or object is in view which appears to us important or precious beyond all else, we must regard feeling as part of religion's very essence. According to its own strength and direction, therefore, feeling not only alters the apparent form of the ideal world ; it makes that world appear to us ideal, makes it most wonderful, strong and real. It is true that the unfolding of divinity for men must in great measure depend upon the grade of their intelligence. But this unfolding depends no less upon the degree of their advance in sentiment. But as God's thoughts are felt to be not as our thoughts, so the ways of his purpose and attachment are felt to be above ours. The man who is vindictive may appreciate a god who forgives ; but only because there is already struggling within the man himself a thwarted impulse to forgive. If such an impulse had not been felt by him or by his kindred who help to form his thought, God would still be for him merciless and vengeful. Emerson's thought that we praise what we ourselves lack is no absolute truth. We praise sincerely only what we half possess.

Thus when even a part of the appearances of religion are before us, it seems no longer possible (whatever our own preferences may be) to speak seriously of excluding feeling from religion. This would be as idle as to expect men to go through the weightiest secular affairs without emotion—to remain cool and even-tempered in all crises, impassive in the presence of genius, of the ocean, or upon some Alpine pass. For we have seen that the feelings of religion are peculiar to it neither in their office nor in their intrinsic character. Certain feelings, such as the emotions of vain-glory and of humour, are held in less honour amongst the religious, or are perhaps utterly neglected or expelled. But those retained are of like quality with the more acceptable feelings toward parents, friends, and the father-land, whereto feeling is desired and even cultivated. And this likeness of quality and function between the religious and the secular emotions is further shown, in that Art serves, both here and there, as a common mode of expressing the honour in which the greatest objects are held.

In truth, feeling holds as central a place in religion as does knowledge or purpose ; for without it any real homage to the Ideal would be impossible—indeed, there would be no Ideal, for this itself is born of preference, of feeling.

With this we close our review of the wide work and character not only of feeling generally, but of certain special feelings. The commonest human emotions, of self-regard and self-depreciation, of sympathy with others and with the world, and of antipathy toward these, are of influence upon the whole religious system and conception. They directly give form to the world of reward and punishment, and to the relation of God to men. And furthermore, the mind, by its very attention to a more impressive form of existence, finds itself drawn to opposite poles of feeling : now honouring and now despising the self ; holding fellow-men in respect or in contempt ; loving or else hating the ways and institutions of the world ; viewing the relation

between humanity and the divine, now with excitement and now with calm, and in particular with gladness or with sorrow. The very fealty to the Ideal—so intricate is the character, both of the Ideal and of our loyalty to it—stirs into life the most contrary emotions, until in their conflict they rest at fierce tension, or one subdues the other. Examples of this conflict have been seen within many single religions, and as one religion stands opposed to another. There has thus been an attempt to explain the presence of the different feelings themselves; and furthermore, to show their interaction and to what they lead—to show how human nature is moved when facing the highest; and how its contrasting feelings in their turn cast their own light and colour over this higher realm. And so in its endless variety of shading and source and consequence, feeling, which is in the end rejected by some as a hindrance, comes to be viewed by many as an evidence and medium of vital intercourse between man and the world of spirit, and in strange ways is sought and intensified.

But occasionally there has appeared, in observing this amazing diversity of feeling and of feeling's causes and effects, another group of facts—of *action* and of *purpose*. Various practices, of ceremonial and other kinds, have been observed in connection with feeling, either employed to heighten or control it, or else flowing from it as a spontaneous expression. The religious acts thus indirectly brought to notice must now be examined for their own inherent interest.





## PART II

### CONFLICTS IN REGARD TO ACTION



## CHAPTER VIII

### CEREMONIAL AND ITS INNER SUPPORTS

MANY of the great things of religion come of humble stock. This is true of its external acts. They begin in foolish mummery, in all manner of cheap and childish tricks to reach one's end, and did we not see with our very eyes what they finally come to, no one could believe that they furnish the parentage of good. Acts that are intended to appeal to spirits or gods, if traced back, are often found to have their historic source in magic, pure and simple, in spells or charms differing from religious rites inasmuch as they accomplish their results by their own inherent though mysterious power and without first influencing some spiritual being by motives of the mind. The thought in these lowest rites of magic is often as vague as is the common idea of luck and its connection with what it brings. Certain ways of action are felt to be 'lucky' or potent, and that is all the agent can say about them. I shall not attempt to give more than a few illustrations of the wide extent of such a confidence.

Among the Malays there are recognized ways in which a man may become a magician ; he must, for example, first meet the ghost of a murdered man, and this can be accomplished by certain mystical acts and incantations.<sup>1</sup> In Australia a man may kill his enemy by secretly pointing at him with a magic stick and cursing him.<sup>2</sup> And similar

<sup>1</sup> Skeat : *Malay Magic*, 1900, pp. 60 f.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer and Gillen : *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, 1904, pp. 455 ff.

faith in the direct and magic virtue of certain ways of action is found the world over among savage people. Nor does one have to go to savagery for examples : greater religions usually retain remnants of prohibitions or fears of this earlier magic. The Atharva-Veda of the Sanskrit, for instance, contains an immense collection of magic spells—to ward off disease, to cure wounds, to give long life, to secure affection. And the Yî King of the Chinese—the ‘ Book of Changes ’—sets forth in endless explication the forms and figures which, used in connection with certain stalks of a plant said to be still grown on Confucius’s grave, could reveal to the enquirer luck good or bad. The older Arabs had a custom, prohibited by Mohammed, of making a hole in the rear of the house, in order to enter through this upon the return from Mecca, for they believed that, upon this occasion, to enter one’s house by the door was unlucky.<sup>1</sup> And—recalling the feeling amongst us regarding Friday or thirteen—the Lî Kî says that external undertakings should be commenced on odd days, internal on the even.<sup>2</sup> In the Zend-Avesta, as in savage thought, the parings of nails, the combings of the hair, must be buried with “ fiend-smiting ” words ; carelessness in this regard is a “ most deadly deed whereby a man increases most the baleful strength of the Daêvas, as he would do by offering them a sacrifice.”<sup>3</sup> And again, it is said that by rubbing with the feather of the raven, Vârengana, one may curse his enemies, and none can smite him or turn him to flight. “ The feather of that bird of birds brings him help ; it brings unto him the homage of men, it maintains in him his glory.”<sup>4</sup> Or the utterance of certain words may have a direct and magic influence ; they become “ fiend-smiting and most healing.”<sup>5</sup> The sacred hymn may thus be efficacious of itself, or the

<sup>1</sup> See Koran, II (VI, 27, w. Palmer’s note).

<sup>2</sup> Lî Kî, I, 1, 5, 6 (XXVII, 94).

<sup>3</sup> Vendidad, XVII, 6 (IV, 186 ff.).

<sup>4</sup> Bahrâm Yast, XIV, 35 (XXIII, 241), and cf. XVI, 44 (XXIII 243) for the spell of four feathers.

<sup>5</sup> Vendidad, X, *passim*.



action of the god may be regarded as a piece of magic. Agni supports the sky by his "efficacious spells."<sup>1</sup>

The words themselves may gain efficacy through certain sacred associations, as when magic and religion are mingled, in charms like the following for stanching blood, handed down to us by Samuel Pepys as "thought fit to keep":

"Sanguis mane in te  
Sicut Christus fuit in se  
Sanguis mane in tuâ venâ  
Sicut Christus in suâ poenâ;  
Sanguis mane fixus,  
Sicut Christus quando fuit crucifixus."<sup>2</sup>

There are many more such charms recorded in a strange collection called "The Long-Hidden Friend," used among the Pennsylvania Germans.<sup>3</sup> Negro simplicity and periwigged shrewdness of the seventeenth century show a common blood in the following, again from Pepys, who had been in doubt as to whether "the good plight" as to his health was due to his hare's foot, his morning pill of turpentine, or to his leaving off the wearing of a gown: Jan. 20th, 1664-5: "Homeward, in my way buying a hare, and taking it home, which arose upon my discourse to-day with Mr. Batten in Westminster Hall, who showed me my mistake that my hare's foot hath not the joynt to it; and assures me he never had his choliue since he carried it about him: and it is a strange thing how fancy works, for I no sooner handled his foot but I become very well, and so continue."<sup>4</sup> The belief in the healing or protecting power inhering in certain objects that have been blessed or have been close to holy men belongs to this general way of thinking. The sacred name, by its mere utterance or graven look, works spells, as in the legends of King Solomon's Seal, with its power to do all wonders, because on it was the Name of all names.

<sup>1</sup> Rig-Veda, I, 67 (XLVI, 61).

<sup>2</sup> Pepys's Diary, ed. 1872, II, 197.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, XVII, 89 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Pepys's Diary, ed. 1872, II, 203 f.

Yet here magic and religion are more confused, for the object works of itself, like a charm, but behind and around it are the enforcement and good-will of a protecting spirit to whom one turns. This transition stage, half sorcery, half religion, is seen clearly in the great Finnish epic of the Kalevala, where direct and god-like power is always looked upon as resembling that of the magician. In the contest between the hero Wainamoinen of Finland and the hot braggart minstrel of Lapland, the Finnish hero sings his opponent's trappings into reeds and stones, sings the Lap himself deep into the quicksands and ever deeper, until the victim's fair sister is promised as a ransom. Joyfully this is accepted by Wainamoinen, and with another song the prisoner is released from peril and there is restored to him his horse, his sled, and all the fittings over which had gone the spell.<sup>1</sup> Again, the magic balsam distilled for nine days to cure the wound of Wainamoinen is tested by applying it to a torn birch, whose broken branches are at once made whole, and all the tree becomes beautiful. And in a like manner the splintered sandstone, the cleft granite, the fissured mountain are healed by the virtue of the balm. Yet it is also said—and here the thought of magic is in part surmounted—that this balsam works by the power of the great god Ukko.<sup>2</sup> But even more clearly does magic rite pass into religious ritual when Wainamoinen, wishing to know what has become of the sun and moon that had been stolen from the heavens, seeks the knowledge by a prayer to Ukko the Creator, yet accompanying his prayer by mysterious and potent acts: he first cuts three chips from the alder, and lays them in magic order, touching and turning them with his fingers; and only then does he address the supreme God, who is also called 'the great Magician.' And although the alder is declared to be the symbol of the Creator, yet it, too, is addressed as having a will of its own; if it gives a false answer Wainamoinen threatens it with the nether fires of Manala. Then the

<sup>1</sup> Rune III.<sup>2</sup> Rune IX.

alder answers truthfully that the sun and moon are sleeping in the copper-bearing mountain of Pohyola.<sup>1</sup> In this way the power behind and the power resident in the magic object pass in and out ; somewhat as in Judaism the Ark of the Covenant brought disease and death upon those who violated it, but brought these by reason of God's anger.<sup>2</sup>

But rites and objects finally become far more of religious than of magical character. And then we are in the presence of true ceremonial, of which examples lie on every hand. Indeed, instances could be drawn from almost any religion, savage or civilized, of the present or the past. "At a stated time," we are told by Tacitus, speaking of the Semnones, "all the tribes that have common blood assemble by their representatives in a wood consecrated by the auguries of the forefathers and by long-persistent dread. And here, after publicly offering a human sacrifice, they celebrate, in all its original and terrible form, their savage rite. Moreover, there is special reverence paid the grove itself. No one may enter it save in chains, as an inferior and with acknowledgment of the power of the divinity over him. If by chance he fall, he must not be lifted up, nor may he raise himself ; he must roll out along the ground."<sup>3</sup> Here, it was their belief, their nation had its origin, and here dwelt the all-ruling God. The Persians, Herodotus tells us, and in telling, contrasts them with the Greeks, "build no altar, kindle no fire, when about to sacrifice. With them there is neither libation nor flute nor garlands nor sprinkled barley. But when one wishes to sacrifice to a particular divinity, he encircles his head-dress usually with myrtle, and takes his offering to some spot that is undefiled, and there calls upon his god. The sacrificer may never seek blessings on himself alone, but he prays that it may be well with all the Persians and with their king.

<sup>1</sup> Rune XLIX (Crawford, 704 f.).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chronicles, XIII, 10 ff. ; 1 Samuel, V, 1-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Germania*, XXXIX.

For with good fortune to them will come his own.”<sup>1</sup> The festival of the lamps among the Egyptians,<sup>2</sup> the elaborate sacrifices to the gods of Heaven and Earth among the Chinese, of human beings to Moloch and to the grisly gods of Mexico, the solemn rites to the Vedic gods, or to Ahura Mazda, the Mohammedan’s turning in the earlier days toward Jerusalem but later toward the sacred mosque at Mecca, the elaborate ceremonial of the Pilgrimage of the Muslims, need no more than to be named, especially when examples enough must come instantly to mind to all who are familiar with the ritual requirements of the ancient Jews. Here are seen the details of endless ceremonial—of meat offerings and the offerings of first fruits; of sin-offerings and burnt-offerings; prescriptions regarding the person and the garments of the priests, and the consecration of the temple helpers; the ceremony of the silver trumpets, of the scapegoat, of circumcision, of the Pass-over, and much beside.

Yet in one particular, even with all its elaborateness, ritualism never with the Jews reached quite the pitch it attained in India where by the ceremonial the gods themselves are pushed quite into obscurity. Here we find them at times forced to obedience by the rite, or depending upon human observances for their strength.<sup>3</sup> And the mere utensils and materials used in service are themselves objects of adoration—as when in the Veda the sacrificial post is asked to bestow all manner of blessings.<sup>4</sup> Ritual has here grown so important that it has taken prime place. Where the sacrifice is in this way felt to be effectual of itself and quite apart from any favour of the gods, the essential feature of magic has returned to crowd out the religious element;<sup>5</sup> religious acts by their independent virtue have

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, I, 132; for the limits of Herodotus’s accuracy here, v. Sayce’s ed. of Herod., 1883, 79, note.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, II, 62.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Oldenberg: *Religion des Veda*, 1894, 311 f.; de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 525.

<sup>4</sup> Vedic Hymns, III, 8 (XLVI, 252).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, pp. 74, 525.



now become a kind of spell. Wherever in Christianity it is felt that the saying of a certain round of prayers or the attendance upon certain ceremonies is potent of itself, and not as a means of communion with divinity, we have sporadically the same temper as of the Brahmin. It is to be regarded as a return to magic by the very extravagance of the emphasis on externals.

Just as a peculiar manner of performance may exist before the special meaning and intent comes in which makes the rite religious, and may continue to exist after the spirit has departed and left it again mere magic, so the acts and symbols in still other ways show a strange persistence. As the rosary may mark the devotions of the Muslim and the Buddhist<sup>1</sup> as well as the Christian, and the lamp be always burning in the shrine of Minerva Polias<sup>2</sup> as well as in a Christian Church, or the cross may stand for the four points of the compass and the four chief winds, as in old Mexico,<sup>3</sup> or for victorious suffering, as in Christendom to-day ; so throughout religion, ceremonial acts may be performed with the greatest difference of interpretation—the same external fact serving as the garment for ideas and feelings that wax and wane and yield to one another. While, in some instances, the same feelings and ideas may outlive many particular ways of their embodiment, showing an odd kind of metempsychosis ; here, on the contrary, the rite, the external form, is more stable than the spirit that enters it. In this way circumcision had a far different meaning for the later Jews from what it must have had for the Jews of earlier days. Although the external act remained practically the same as that performed by many other peoples ; yet by the thought infused into it, the rite became more spiritual and less gross : “ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff-necked.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Palmer : *Introd. to Qur'ân*, p. lxviii ; de la Saussaye : *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, pp. 609, 631.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, IX, 1, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Reville : *Religions of Mexico and Peru*, 1884, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy, X, 16, and cf. Deut. XXX, 6, and Romans, II, 29.

Or the drama, which in some instances may have been, as Frazer believes,<sup>1</sup> a device akin to sympathetic magic, certainly does not remain this, but becomes an instrument of vivid instruction as well as of festal celebration. The sacred meal would further illustrate this ennoblement of rite. Often in early society it seems to be a rude way of making some desired spirit enter into the eater, by devouring that in which the spirit dwells. But later, losing this rude character, it becomes, as with the Chinese or the Zoroastrians, not unlike a family reunion at the table, an occasion when gods and men express their common interest and bond. With still others it is a symbol that man is dependent, for all that is good and necessary, upon the bounty and spiritual strength of God. In such a way Christianity has adopted most freely the festivals and practices, not of the Jew alone, but of the pagan Roman, or of the savage Northerner. It has taken the old tokens, making them, however, bear an altered sense and value. So the rite may change, but it changes far more slowly than the thoughts and feelings which are hidden in it. Observances that hark back to sheerest savagery may still serve as the wrapping for the highest reverence. So acted the fathers, and in the very ancientness of the custom, man loses the small privacy of his thought of God. Such remnants of the past are to some a mere impediment; to others they are no more a check than old words are to poetic feeling.

If we were to pass from these examples, so insufficient to indicate the infinite range of ritual, and were to attempt more fully to understand the motives which bring and maintain formal observance in religion, much stress would have to be laid upon its savage origin, but not too much. For nothing is easier than to let origins hinder as well as help perception—as a Lincoln would be misunderstood if one looked too exclusively at his wretched birth and childhood, quite as truly as if one did not look at these at all.

It is clear that ritual at the start drew heavily on magic,

<sup>1</sup> *Golden Bough*, 1900, III, 164 f.

keeping the magic practice, as Wainamoinen used the arrangement of the alder chips, but with the thought now going in and through them to the god. The divinity at first is to be controlled by charm or spell, rather than by those motives of selfish or generous interest through which men later make appeal. The rite, in such a state of mind, is but a bit of magic pointed heavenward. But we find ritual where no such magic element appears, and so we must look for other sources too. And these can best be appreciated if we bear in mind beforehand that careful ceremony is not kept for religion only, but appears wherever an act seems of special significance and can be so ordered as to express and celebrate its spaciousness of meaning. The inauguration of a President, the coronation of a King, the opening of Congress or Parliament, is universally given an outward dignity by formal ways that in a measure are quite superfluous judged by their bare common usefulness. And these most fitting of useless additions and honoured ancient habits are seen in all other parts of life in their own degree. The worn mould of legal pleading, the fixities of social intercourse, the conventional forms of invitation, and of introduction, and of greeting, the special and only allowable times and costumery for this and that, are subjects of endless compassion from the thoughtful; and yet all these things live on, not because men are stupid followers of custom, but because the customs themselves give something that is needed.

In some instances there is even a hidden utility in the act—as in having a fixed time or period, whatever it may be, for ‘calls’; as the telephone, with its perpetual intrusion, shows. And doubtless the law courts could hardly serve our present needs if there were no prescription of procedure, but men scrambled in and cried out their wrongs as best they could. Often the utility is not so much in having things ordered in some particular way, as in having them ordered in any way at all. Especially when there is a strong desire to meet the preferences and even whims of others,

there comes a mental rest in the knowledge that some things at least are not left to be guessed—as when in Germany a formal invitation may allay at once a natural doubt by saying out clearly ‘*weisse Binde.*’ Often, too, and especially on great occasions, formality comes from the longing for embellishment. The occasion is momentous and must have its own light and atmosphere. At such times there is pleasure in tossing aside mere utility and providence, with all its air of commonplace, and, like boys again, feeling the fresh touch of life and freedom. And this freedom is heightened by the sense that the prescription is not of our making nor of anyone we know, but has come down from the unremembered past. It is rid of all that is petty, personal, and changing; and is distantly like the sky and the courses of the stars.

In religious observances, whether they are or are not technically of the ritual, there are all these motives and much beside. If it seems unfitting that the approach to kings should be helter-skelter, how much more the approach to one who rules the world. Here is the rarest, the most important situation in all life, and should be so enacted as if it were like nothing else. There is therefore a sentiment favouring what is apart, so that men may show, in mere manner and form of speech, in garments and in specially prepared surroundings, that common things are set aside.

And yet this is not a matter of sentiment merely. The special and uncommon setting changes the current and character of one’s ideas. An acquaintance of mine has confessed that he can more successfully attack a purely intellectual problem when in church; as another tells me his thought is freer at a concert. And all this is quite intelligible. The very escape from besetting circumstance, if nothing more—yet with a simplicity that soothes without distraction—helps to take the fetters from the mind. One can more readily slough off what is momentary and prudent, and come into touch with the universal. So it seems



reasonable to guard the associations of the church, keeping them so that the very place is unaccustomed to what is trivial.

There is a much larger gain if in addition to this more general influence of externals, they give the mind thus stimulated and set free a definite leading toward truth. And religion at its best always attempts this. The ritual aims not to stir the feelings in general, but to unite them with thoughts of God. The cross borne aloft suggests the victory that comes of divine suffering ; the elevated Host, the source from which man is to seek his strength. The rite does not remain on the sensuous and muscular side of faith, but moves over toward the intellectual as well, of which more need not now be said. And yet it does not move entirely away from the active side even when the worshipper seems to have little to do but to observe the priests and acolytes—the processions, the genuflexions, the crossings, and movements of sacred symbols. The observer's own response to this, by lip and thought and sympathy, makes him by an inner imitation an active participant in the rite. In so far as men really enter into the ceremony, they are themselves co-actors in the presentation of the mystery.

It would seem, therefore, unwise to look too steadfastly in any one particular direction for the source and reason of religious rites and ceremonies. They connect with magic, but not with magic only ; nor do they connect exclusively with myth. There has been an attempt to explain all the forms of worship by supposing them copied from the practices described in stories of the gods : “ There is nothing in worship but what existed before in mythology,” writes Darmsteter.<sup>1</sup> “ What we call a practice is only an imitation of gods, an *ὁμοίωσις θεῶν*, as man fancies he can bring about the things he wants by performing the acts which are supposed to have brought about things of the same kind when practised by the gods.” But if, as seems prob-

<sup>1</sup> Introd. to Zend-Avesta, p. lxxxvii.

able, the actions of the gods are suggested by the most impressive forms of human action, the details of myth then are quite as truly an imitation of the heroic acts of men, an *ὁμοίωσις ἀνθρώπῳ*, and rite thus finds its pattern in human conduct. Something of this thought is present in the theory that makes ritual the *source* of myth rather than its product. But it would seem preferable to bind myth and ritual less closely together, for the roots of each run far too wide for this. Myth finds its origin in broader interests than the mere projection of religious or magic observances. The personification of great nature-powers and the personal conduct and adventure suggested by their vicissitudes are one great motive—as in all those myths which tell as an heroic story the death and revival of warmth and vegetation. Other myths are doubtless the projection of actual deeds of men, or are crude attempts at explaining the origin of the whole world or of some special process or object in it. And many other sources still remain to confound those who would derive all myth from some single source, like that of religious ritual.

And ceremony in religion finds, in its turn, its origin and strength in many ways. In some cases the rite may be an earthly repetition of divine action recounted in a myth—such was the Egyptians' own interpretation of that mimic battle with which, at Paprêmis,<sup>1</sup> the god re-entered his temple ; and such was their representation at night, upon the lake at Saïs, of the suffering of that god whose name Herodotus in reverence would not mention.<sup>2</sup> In other cases there is the thought of influencing in an imitative way the course of nature—as in that feasting of the orphaned young in ancient China in the Spring, since “drinking serves to nourish the developing influence,” while in the autumn there was a feeding of the aged, in order “to nourish the receding influence.”<sup>3</sup> Often ceremonial is but the per-

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, II, 63 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 171 ; and cf. Book of the Dead, XVIII, and Budge's note, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> Li Kî, IX, I, 4 (XXVII, 418).

sistence in religion of the ways of approach and petition of great officials—of courtly audience, of bringing tribute by a subject people to their liege, of appeasing by gifts and by show of humility the anger of their lord. Such ceremonial usages would be the easier of origin and continuance since the earthly ruler was often regarded as divine, and so the etiquette of court and of temple service would here be one. And even when the office of heavenly and earthly ruler became distinct, somewhat the same feeling would affect those who approached either throne, and would lead to observances that showed some general likeness. But with all these there goes a general motive, since the worshippers feel the appropriateness of *doing* something to acknowledge their relation to the gods, and of doing something that shall express this relation's similarity to the most significant bonds which hold among men, and yet express its uniqueness in that it transcends all earthly ties. Ritual begins with those acts which visibly and in actual experience produce great effects with men, but remoulds such acts to a higher use as inducements and channels of communion with the gods. But religion does not for ever keep its eye on tangible benefits to be obtained; the ritual is *expressive*, and has in it no more of mere prudence and calculation than has the gold upon a state-house dome, or the bannered procession of a party victorious at the polls.<sup>1</sup>

The prescribed and communal way of acting must find a further warrant, finally, in the spirit which it fosters among those who unite in the act itself. Especially in his religion does the plain man wish the support and sympathy of others. It is not entirely because the end itself seems more likely to be compassed if a great show of numbers is made—as in war or in petition to a government—but the end and aim itself stands out and seems of greater value because of others' interest in it. The assembly, the focussing of attention, the united action—these of themselves in some

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Coit: *National Idealism and a State Church*, 1907, ch. XI, on "The Psychology of Ritual."

part accomplish the purpose of religion, one great object of which is to satisfy that longing for a larger and more perfect companionship than our usual life affords. Yet mere aggregation is not enough ; there must be something outward and visible to produce and make evident a common inner purpose, a sympathy and sense of union ; and this in some degree is given by great observances in which many join. Inasmuch as ceremonies unite men so, we can see a reason for them, which may be somewhat obscured so long as we are engrossed in trying to explain this or that particular ceremony.

But the activities of religion that minister to all these ends are not confined to great assemblies. More personal and familiar ceremony is also of importance. Solemn rites—like those of baptism, of marriage, and of burial—are part of the search for the help, protection, or blessing of the spiritual world upon occasions momentous for the individual. Such times are felt to be too significant to be passed lightly by ; the entire family, the friends, the neighbours wish, or must be induced, to enter into them. At the lowest there is a gathering with mummerly and incantation to ward off evil ; at the highest, and even far below the highest, there is sympathy and generous symbolism, and a confession of how weak man is alone, and of trust in the near aid of the all-powerful Good.



## CHAPTER IX

### COOLNESS TOWARD RITES

CEREMONIAL in due time comes to lie under some suspicion. This is because ritual is liable to abuse, since there is a temptation, which many cannot resist, to feel that the mere unthinking performance is enough—a feeling which in its absurd extremity produces prayer-wheels and prayer-flags inscribed with pious petitions ; or gives us the story of the forester who, treed by a tiger, is saved by Siva because quite unwittingly he had gone through certain external acts.<sup>1</sup> And now it becomes necessary for the leaders to speak of the shortcomings of mere ceremony, and of what is needed to make the rite effective. The Muslim is warned that he must know what he is saying if his prayer is to be of value ; the faithful are commanded not to pray when drunk !<sup>2</sup> So, too, mention is made of “those who say with their mouths ‘We believe,’ but their hearts do not believe.”<sup>3</sup> Righteousness is only of him who in addition to the rites of Islam “fears the Merciful in secret and brings a repentant heart.”<sup>4</sup> In India is found the same insistence that the heart must enter into religious acts. “Whatever oblation is offered, whatever is given, whatever penance is performed, and whatever is done, without faith, that, O Son of Prithâ ! is called ‘Asat,’ and that is naught, both after death and here.”<sup>5</sup> “I heard the Master say”—we find in the Chinese, with its impressive temperance of statement—“I heard the Master say

<sup>1</sup> Wilson : *Religion of the Hindus*, 1861-62, II, 218.

<sup>2</sup> Koran, IV (VI, 78).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, V (VI, 103).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, L (IX, 244).

<sup>5</sup> *Bhagavadgîtâ*, XVII (VIII, 121).

that in the rites of mourning, exceeding grief with deficient rites is better than little demonstration of grief with superabounding rites ; and that in those of sacrifice, exceeding reverence with deficient rites is better than an excess of rites with but little reverence.”<sup>1</sup> Again it is said that the ‘ Sons of Heaven ’ secured the good government of the kingdom by their power to enter into the meaning of the ideas behind the ceremony.<sup>2</sup> But more is needed than mere understanding in an intellectual way : sincerity and true reverence and a right heart are a necessary part of observing the rites of religion.<sup>3</sup> That the inner life must in some way be in keeping with the outward form is made apparent also in the Parsee scriptures : the divinity may be approached with ample libations, gifts, sacrifices, and entreaty, and yet remain unmoved, because the request is evil and comes from one whose life is wrong. The fiendish snake and the murderer thus, for all their outward piety and endless offerings, cannot obtain from heaven their requests.<sup>4</sup>

But the expression of this need of sincerity and right living, if even thoughtful ritual is to bring results, is not confined to pictures of mere refusal of petition. The rite itself then becomes abhorrent to the deity to whom it is offered. “ To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me,” cries the Lord ; “ Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. Wash you, make you clean ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”<sup>5</sup>

What may here perhaps be but a fierce and passing outburst to goad a people into a life in keeping with the meaning of their ceremonial acts, and not really and for ever to

<sup>1</sup> *Lî Kî*, II, 1, 2, 27 (XXVII, 141) ; cf. *Analects*, III, 4 and 26 ; and II, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Lî Kî*, IX, 3, 7 (XXVII, 439).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, 2, 2, and 19 (XXVII, 404, 414).

<sup>4</sup> *Âbân Yast*, VIII, 29 ff. ; XI, 41 ff. (XXIII, 60 f., 64 f.).

<sup>5</sup> *Isaiah*, I, 11-17, w. omiss.

neglect those acts, does with others, however, become a permanent turning away from ritualism as an enemy of real piety and good morals. With men of this belief there seems to be the sharp alternative between going into sheer formalism without moral activity or of giving up formality once and for all. Extreme formalism brings a reaction away from anything that suggests it dimly. And so, as reverence advances, we find a whole class of religionists who, while believing in outward activity, yet show a cleft into two classes—those who incline toward ceremonial because it is removed from common use, and those who turn from it for this very reason and who act in a more utilitarian way—feeding the hungry and visiting the sick. Even in our day, one form of activity at times appears to the exclusion of the other, when we see staunch ritualists who will rarely do an act of common helpfulness, and again those whose only religious utterance is in acts of good-will, and who feel an aversion from anything that savours of religious form. In many religious communities, however, the two types of activity are closely joined—rites are supplemented by practical beneficence, and good deeds by rites.

In modern Christianity are seen different leanings of this sort. The ritual of the Roman and the Greek Church stands in contrast with the generally less ritualistic Protestant branch; but again, within Protestantism itself a difference of sympathy appears. In Germany the Lutheran Church has its vestments, its formal chanted responses, its priestly announcement of absolution from sin—like the Church of England or the Episcopal Church in America. Standing in relief against these are various groups that reduce the fixities and forms of worship, until sometimes a religious assembly is hardly to be distinguished from any other meeting. Yet the main bodies almost everywhere have favoured ceremonial, and those who protest violently against it, whether in England or Germany, in India or Judea, have been dissenters from the common custom.

In America, however, although the ritualists are strong

in number, yet relatively they are perhaps weaker than in any other land. And this is due to several causes. The colonies were peopled mainly by men who represented the dissidence of dissent from the Established Church of England, and thus a tradition favouring extreme plainness was here established which is hard to change. But besides this, the churches of America have probably been much affected by the prevailing standards of political and social intercourse. The absence of a court and of a powerful aristocracy to be patterns of urbanity and elegance has made it seem natural that religious intercourse, too, should be easy and direct. But after all, some violence has evidently been done to human nature, that will be avenged. For the love of noble ceremony, cheated at its rightful place, appears in the tawdry ritualism of 'fraternal' bodies, which in America have had such unparalleled popularity. Here the staunch republican, renouncing the bauble crown and pageantry of kings, can again rejoice in dazzling regalia and stilted phrase. The ceremonial side of these organizations shows an almost pathetic attempt to appease the natural craving for action unhindered, orderly, and gracious—a craving which in other countries finds its satisfaction in the scenes that go with military pomp, with royalty, and the service of great cathedrals.

But there are religionists even in more ceremonious lands who, while favouring action rather than passivity, yet turn from ritual. And so the cleavage among actionists cannot be ascribed to the local situation here or there. The wish to serve God by deeds useful to one's fellows, rather than by acts which are symbolic and which move more directly from man to God is very difficult to disentangle fully, but it can at least be partly understood. And so the attempt may be made.

In a silent way religion is always influenced by the respect which the social life wins from us. It is because men are born for companionship that they seek and find it everywhere—not only in their fellow-men, but in spirits of trees



and wind and sun and stars, and in spirits that have no fixed station or perceptible abode. And the circle of men who seem markedly impressive to the individual undergoes change from time to time. At first it is the few at hand, the rarest specimens—chieftains, kings, heroes, demi-gods—that seem to count for much. But there is for most men a gradual recognition of the significance of even plain men; they, too, are admitted to have certain rights and immunities; and the gods themselves are recognized as the protectors of the stranger, the beggar, and the defenceless orphan. Moreover, this respect for unshowy human beings, which religion comes to enjoin, grows so great with some that it crowds out all the other contents of reverence, and religion now becomes purely a service of humanity. As ritual may crowd out the gods, so morality, adopted and sanctioned by religion, may likewise crowd them out.<sup>1</sup> The balance and roundness of religion is thus for ever imperilled by its parts. It is shrivelled on this side because of hypertrophy on that. And that which may in extremity be the death of morals,<sup>2</sup> because all the interest and energy flows Godward, suffers in its own turn when morality becomes so all-absorbing that God pales and disappears. This rivalry which exists for so many, between serving God and serving men, is probably the cause of the jealousy which appears between ritual and moral action. And even where morality remains religious, and religion moral, and God and men alike are served, yet there is a growing tendency to regard divinity as less interested in heaven's welfare than in earth's; less interested in having acts that please God directly and alone, than in those that please him because they help mankind. In this way man feels it to be God's will that less weight should be given to purely divine rites and more to human benefaction.

<sup>1</sup> Take, e.g., Confucius's attitude, as expressed in the *Analects*, VI, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gladstone to the Duchess of Sutherland: "There is one proposition which the experience of life burns into my soul; it is this, that man should beware of letting his religion spoil his morality." *Morley's Life of Gladstone*, II, 185.

Yet there is no absolute conflict between ritual and moral interest. For ritual in religion depends actually upon a sense of the significance of the gods, upon a form of moral feeling. For if one were unmoral utterly, he would be unsocial, the gods themselves would labour in vain to impress him, and he would never worship. Ritual that is not magic is a form of morality turned Godward ; and when it seems to be jealous of earthly morals, this means a conflict within different parts of the larger morality, rather than morality competing with something entirely outside it. And indeed, reverence at its best brings its own cure for any neglect of men which it may occasion. For high reverence is respect for a God of definite moral character, whose sympathy goes only to those who act honourably toward their fellow-men. In spite of its occasional contracting interest, religion in its total course is the great ally of morals.

But we must not lose sight of at least one other cause of coolness toward ritual, even where men are still activists. Often the aversion is part of that general impatience with whatever hinders freedom. And ritual often does seriously hinder freedom by becoming trivial and punctilious, as with the Brahmin or the ancient Jew. Then freedom must be sought by some great destructive effort, or by turning to a more temperate faith. Islam, by its milder observances, brought in this way relief to the Persians from the extravagance of the Magian ritual with its dread of polluting the fire and the earth.<sup>1</sup> Christianity was an immense loosening of the ritual bonds of Judaism ; Protestantism a relief from the exactions of the Roman Church.

And even when the rites are of no great inconvenience, there may come to be an impatience of all that seems set and fixed, especially in our West, where men grow extravagantly fond of freedom. Hidden in everyone there is a trace of the radical or even of the anarchist ; and if he is not always throwing bombs at government, he more

<sup>1</sup> Darmesteter : *Introd. to Zend-Avesta*, pp. liv f.

mildly shatters some small convention for freedom's sake. In its own way, ceremonial is a fixed and fettering thing ; and by revolt against it in favour of human charity, individualism is in some measure reasserted. For in charities the will is expressed with less apparent convention and more isolatedly ; each may choose the object of his kindness and perform his act when and in what manner he elects. And faith thereby may seem to have found a more sincere, because more private and personal, utterance. One may in this see that several causes contribute to make men cold if not hostile toward ceremonial action—causes to which still others will be added when later we come to examine the motives toward passivity.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME RIVAL INFLUENCES UPON ACTION

WE must now pass from the question why some choose action that is practical and humanly useful, rather than ritual action which so often, like laughter, seems to die in the mere expression, leaving nothing behind; and instead some opposing forces should be noticed that give action now one form and now another.

It would seem almost futile to delay and ask why men act at all in religion—as idle as to ask why men act in common social life. Men are endowed with reflexes and instincts, and act from these and from impulse, as well as from deliberate intent and will. And just as human situations stir and stimulate us to performance, so the situations that go beyond visible companionship call forth response. Let action then, to avoid too wide a sweep, be taken as though it were self-intelligible (though, of course, it is not); and our only interest for the time shall be in trying to see a little farther into its diversities and into some strains of character that affect it.

The contrast so well known between activity that comes of habit or routine, and activity that is fresh, reforming or creative is weighty also for religion. To some extent both kinds are part of life, and appear in every living being. Each must be both stationary and moving. Each must show both submission and initiative—in body, in mind, both in human and in divine relations. But action itself seems often to be without the element of originality, or else to be ex-



clusively original. The agent insists upon his own purpose making others contribute to it ; or else he takes his purpose entirely from them, and has none of his own to set in opposition. The difference between the masculine and feminine type is in part found here—women being more resonant, more subject to induction from the social current, while men are better insulated, are more self-reliant, readier to believe in their own perceptions and to act upon them. In this way—not so much because of some special endowment lying only in thought or will, but rather because of the general form of character as a whole—men show forth a marvellous richness or vacuity. The great criminals, the great geniuses are men ; and the two classes are similar at least in this, that they are defiant of custom and convention. Originality and freedom of activity are deeply affected by the strength or weakness of the social bond, in which men differ markedly.

Now in religion there is a like difference in the character of action—action that is more conservative, more feminine ; and action of the radical, the masculine type. And in general it seems probable that the founders of religion belong for the most part to the radical, the masculine type. Like those of politics and science and art, the great leaders of religion have had reformation in their blood, and while appreciative of the good that has gone before, they have been nobly defiant of much in custom and tradition. We must not be deceived by the claim, so often sincerely made by reformers, that they are merely returning to the older ways—as when Mohammed asserts that he is not an innovator, but is merely preaching the faith of Abraham.<sup>1</sup> Even with such statements, and when, moreover, old customs are carried over from the former faith,<sup>2</sup> there is real innovation under the guidance of a fresh ideal that merely seems to have had reality in the past. And this reforming spirit which is so prominent at the birth of great religions, reappears in

<sup>1</sup> Koran, XLVI (IX, 225) ; VI (VI, 137).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Koran, II (VI, 22).

varying degrees at later times. The attempts to return to the practices of the Master have in them usually much that is a free departure, for good or ill, from the older ways. In so far as religionists are votaries of the Ideal, they are by that fact turned against the present order, and are not pure conservatives.

And yet the conservative strain here is strong. The mass of the communicants in any religion show the *appreciative* rather than the *creative* spirit, and fail to distinguish the broad principles of the ideal, and the particular mode in which at some given time these find application. And thus so many things that should be mere means and steps are taken as finalities. Partly in this way we may account for that clinging to the established, especially in regard to the formal thought and practices of religion. The very wording of holy utterance becomes almost sacrosanct. The sacred song of the Winnebagoes is in words that no one now uses or can understand.<sup>1</sup> The Song of the Arval Brothers was still used in ancient Roman worship after its archaic language was no longer clear ; just as Latin is used in the Church of Rome all these centuries since its death as common speech, or the forms of expression of older English versions of the Bible are still observed in the church, even though they are misleading or unintelligible. This fixed determination to maintain and love the language of the canon has an interesting effect upon idiom and upon the people's taste. Thus the style and language of the Koran is said to have been, at its time, rugged and even colloquial in some respects ; yet upon becoming canonical it finally so moulds taste that it seems the very ideal of Arabic style, and such that no subsequent writer can quite attain Mohammed's excellence.<sup>2</sup> Something of the kind has doubtless contributed to make our King James version seem such perfection of English style. To the contemporary John Selden<sup>3</sup> it seemed a mass of Hebraisms—English words but

<sup>1</sup> *Indians' Book*, ed. Curtis, 1907, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Palmer : *Introd. to Qur'ân*, pp. lv, lxxvi ff.

<sup>3</sup> Selden : *Table Talk*, V, 3.

not English phrases, he said. But many of these have since then, by the very authority of the Scripture, forced themselves upon the language and now govern our taste and usage.<sup>1</sup>

This sanction given to unessentials is thus an almost universal effect of reverence. It may have its different degrees, as when the Chinese canon, though referring here and there to innovations that seem to have become established, yet pronounces death, without so much as listening to defence, on those who introduce "strange garments, wonderful contrivances, and extraordinary implements," which tend to raise doubts among the multitude.<sup>2</sup> Something of this spirit is in the Russian Doukhobôrs with their effort to live in primitive and holy ways, without contact or intercourse with 'Cæsar' and his minions, without clothing or modern labour and machinery.<sup>3</sup> Here primitivism which in other religions may be a mere matter of proper vestments, positions, sprinkling or immersion or some trick of language, has grown until the chief and only thing in the service of God appears to be the following of ancient prescription to the letter.

But such ways may in a measure be excused if we bear in mind that conservatism is not peculiar to religion; but is an essential part, apt to break out into dogged immobility, in almost any effort. Not only is it always before us in art and politics, but it is strong in the life of savages and children. There is a popular error that fogysm is peculiar to the old. The readiness of children to adopt new ways is less natural and instinctive than we suppose, having often in it a suggestion of duress and the right of might. I distinctly recall the evident pain and black rebellion with which a little boy saw for the first time his older sister deliberately put a chair down upon its back, instead of on its legs, as earth and sky intended; or again, beheld a doll's hat placed

<sup>1</sup> See the series of nine articles on "The Latest Translation of the Bible," by Henry M. Whitney, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1902-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Lî Kî*, III, 4, 16 (XXVII, 237).

<sup>3</sup> Maude: *A Peculiar People; the Doukhobôrs*, 1905.

upon an elder's head. These things clearly seemed to him subversive of all history and social order. And similar ways of regarding things have been noted by observers of savage life.<sup>1</sup> It may make some of us more patient of Toryism generally to think of it as having, even in its extreme conservatism, some touch of childhood; there is perhaps a slight advantage in standing for what is in part infantile, immature, rather than for what is wholly fossilized; it seems a shade less hopeless.

And further, there is some appropriateness in preserving the old in religious custom, unless at too great inner cost, just because it helps the mind away from the momentary and commonplace and private. All innovations suffer from extraneous things; regardless of the merits of his plan, the proposer himself has this or that defect; and this colours the appearance of all he offers. With ancient things all such trifles have vanished, and the tradition, for those who are not bookish, seems to come from time and the spirit of the world. And to understand fully the attachment to religious wrappings, we must remember that human nature always spreads its affections beyond their reasonable seat. The liking for the child spreads over his toys and playmates and all who have his look, especially if he is no more here; his room must be kept, and all within it, as he used them. To the Greek, this is foolishness; but it is human, nevertheless; and religion, including, as it does, all things of our nature, suffers or is enriched from this same source. The place of God and all that has been accustomed to him—the rites, the old familiar ways of expressing confidence and loyalty, the old symbols—always show the after-light of his glory; and so it requires some urgency before reverent men are willing to hack and cobble these things. "After all," they feel, "what if there are better words and better actions than these so familiar? they are not better for us; we shall lose by them more than we gain." But if the

<sup>1</sup> Boas: "Some Traits of Primitive Culture," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, XVII, 243 ff.



present task were not merely to describe and explain, but were to criticize and offer direction, it might be well to add that each generation must, even in its sense of reverence, be willing to sacrifice something for those who are to come. For if readjustments are not made at small inconvenience, they will be made at great and by agony of revolution.

More of the spring and government of action will be apparent when, later, we consider those forms of belief that turn from acts as altogether worthless. But here it would be well to see even dimly the way in which deeds are connected with the feeling for the world and self and one's fellow-men. We must have some sense of the worth of these if we are to act. If all things of this world are worthless, then, of course, no act of ours can be of much importance ; for we can act primarily only upon what is here ; and, after all is done, it remains essentially what it was before—particular, material, connected with sense and body. There may be paralysis, however, not alone from a sense of such necessary limitation, but even in having *too wide* a view, when in the width there is no point of supreme distinctness, no mental fovea. The Eastern mind often suffers, it would seem, from this lack of point. The whole universe lies so endlessly before it, world upon world, life stretching limitless forward and back, birth on birth through ages past and future, that there seems no place to fix interest and intent, and to feel that here is something standing out and worthy of attack and change. The ages seem all of equal clearness with the present ; in immeasured space there are before the mind numberless systems of worlds each with its earth, its sun and moon, its dwelling of the gods, its Brahmâ, its heaven and hell. It is cosmology of the unfixed gaze. And even with regard to personal life, there is a kind of infatuation in mere expanse. " When the Great King of Glory had died " the Blessed One says to his faithful follower Ananda—when the Great King of Glory died, " he came to life again in the happy world of

Brahmâ. For eight and forty thousand years, Ânanda, the Great King of Glory lived the happy life of a prince ; for eight and forty thousand years he was viceroy and heir-apparent ; for eight and forty thousand years he ruled the kingdom ; for eight and forty thousand years he lived, as a layman, the noble life in the Palace of Righteousness. And then, when, full of noble thoughts, he died, he entered, after the dissolution of the body, the noble world of Brahmâ. Now it may be, Ânanda, that you may think, ' The Great King of Glory of that time was another person.' But, Ânanda, you should not view the matter thus. I at that time was the Great King of Glory."<sup>1</sup> And again, there is reference to the one birth, the two births, the three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand births which the same person must endure and may remember !<sup>2</sup> Here, too, we see the universe itself going through alternate æons of destruction and renewal. No one can work when such thoughts actually lie deep in the mind. Your Occidental may somewhere in his science have a glimmer resembling ideas like this ; but in no such world does he live. He narrows things down until they become manageable and are subject to onset and personal absorption.

Action, therefore, is influenced by the view of the world and of its relation to God—whether he and all about leave opportunity and incentive for human effort. And the high value which activity possesses in man's eyes is shown by the fact that supreme activity often is attributed to the divinity. In this feeling Christian and Muslim are at one. " He is God, the one, the victorious. He created the heavens and the earth in truth ! It is He who clothes the day with night ; and clothes the night with day ; and subjects the sun and the moon, each one runs on to an appointed time ; aye ! He is mighty, the forgiving ! "<sup>3</sup> Indeed, action is often felt to be so much an attribute of

<sup>1</sup> Mahâ-Sudassana Sutta, II, 35-37 (XI, 285).

<sup>2</sup> Âkañkheyya Sutta, 17 (XI, 215 f.). <sup>3</sup> Koran, XXXIX (IX, 182).

divinity that none may share it with him. He it is who does all that is done, and man's actions are mere seeming. To many there appears to be no higher title nor one more significant and descriptive of God than to call him 'the Creator.' It comes of the importance which action, especially productive action, has for most men, so that naturally what seems so great in human eyes must in greatest measure be ascribed to God. Yet this ascription of activity to God is by no means universal. "The Lord is not the cause of actions, or the capacity of performing actions amongst men, or of the connection of action and fruit. But nature only works."<sup>1</sup> When action is regarded as a lowly thing, a mark of finitude, God is set free from action, he is not the Creator. The production of the world, then, is a secondary function, delegated to some Demiurge or other finite spirit. In such thoughts and pictures men make clear the value they place on deeds, and on externals.

And in one other way, at least, the value of action appears—in the importance attached in religion to freedom of the will, in regard to which there often seems a sad dilemma. If the power to do be really a mark of worth and nobleness, then the very honour of divinity appears to require that every act should flow from Heaven, and all that man seems to do should really be done of God. Then comes a conflict ; for while action of itself has dignity, yet the character and substance of the act, especially the human act, may be so unworthy, so evil, that it seems best that God forego the dubious honour. Yet some who feel that to be the fount of all achievement is of itself so great a dignity, recklessly make God the author of all acts, both good and ill. This desire even awkwardly to honour God is often checked, however, not only by the fact that actions may be evil, but also by the unconquerable sense that men as well as gods have worth. It is part of that conscious value of even a finite self and of human comrades,

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgītā, V (VIII, 65).

which makes many feel that man is himself a limited creator, either in his own right or by divine favour. While logic does not always rule these ways of thought, yet it comes in to strengthen ; for unless man can really act and is not a puppet, there seems no moral propriety, though there may be a deterrent example, in punishing men for what they did not do. Evil undeserved and yet heaven-sent seems almost an impossibility ; the mind is far less staggered by goods unearned. They come so abundant from nature and from human intercourse, which luckily, even at low ebb, retains much of generosity, that there soon ceases to be a mystery in undeserved rewards. So that man is less captious regarding them, even when he thinks the will and effort are not really his.

Action itself on man's part, as well as the conviction that the act is really his, would thus seem to be the natural accompaniment of self-possession and a sense of personal worth. Those act who are not utterly overpowered by what is beyond them, nor yet indifferent to it. Action is thus a virtue of the mean. Religious energy, whether it be of ritual or of morals, whether it be of self-culture or of impressing its faith on others, is possible only when men feel the bond between the human and the divine—feel it, but not overwhelmingly. They must retain, in all the stir, enough of self-control to see and do. Power and eagerness to act, however, do not seem gravely affected by a denial of free will. Religions which affirm most stoutly that necessity is over all except the Divine Being are often accepted by the incurably active. Calvinism is not in practice anything inert. And Islam, which declares that there is a book for each, wherein from the beginning all his acts are written down and his final fate, is marked by fanatic zeal. Indeed, the confidence in a power which moves us all—such is the curious grain and weave of character—seems often the best device for removing the let and hindrance of scruple and responsibility. The whole human race is in some degree a good servant but a poor



master. It needs to feel the presence of a strong hand and will ; then its timidity and indecision vanish, and it can up and act, even of itself, as the learner often goes without the hand behind him so long as he feels that the hand is there.

## CHAPTER XI

### ACTIVITY AND REVERENT INACTION

**I**N contrast to that part of religion which presses on to action, there stands the restraining side. The divine relation now no longer incites to deeds, whether of impulse or of ceremony, but to a reverent passiveness. All things external, among which lies at least the outer end of voluntary action, are felt as unessential to devotion, and quiet and receptivity are sought instead. The ways between man and the spiritual world are felt to be unseen ; and while this inner communion may lead to occasional acts, yet compared with ceremony and all outward warfare of the faith, they seem a perfect rest. This approach to God by inward ways, however, is not always the same ; sometimes it is a communion into which there goes more of quiet feeling, more of sympathy ; and again, it is rather of intelligence : the distance between man and God is annulled by understanding, by knowledge. The first of these ways, less intellectual, will be before us for the present.

The tracing of this more passive mode of intercourse with divinity leads at first among outward things. For at first the aim, both in magic and in religion, is mainly the attainment of external goods ; and these external goods are sought very largely by external means. For the magician, the words he utters, the mystic characters, the arrangement of lines or sticks or stones—these are potent in themselves. The inner state of the magician is of relatively little importance ; he must have some knowledge, it is true, but this is merely that he may properly carry out the form or

incantation needed to gain the end. At its small beginnings here, the inner state has no value except as an antecedent and preliminary; if the act could be performed without consciousness, its magic power would be no less.

There is, moreover, the belief that the thought or purpose of the supernatural power is revealed in outward signs. The conviction that Heaven reveals its will to men by some visible event exists among most peoples. The Jews of Jesus' time were constantly asking for a sign of the truth of his teaching. The Arabs of Mohammed's day taunted the prophet because no portents confirmed his message. If he really was a prophet, why did he not produce outright a river of water or a garden of fruits? Why did not the heavens fall upon the unbelievers if what they rejected was of God?<sup>1</sup> But some outward indication is looked to, not alone in cases of apostleship, but even in more secular issues. The intent of Heaven is revealed regarding the common affairs of private or public fortune by the stars, the planets, comets, and eclipses, thunder, the flight of birds, or of arrows, the behaviour of sacred fowl, the appearance of the entrails in sacrifice, by the use of the tortoise-shell, by the chance phrase which catches the eye upon opening the Bible or some other book, like Virgil—by these and a thousand things beside. The ancient Germans were diligent in the practice of divination. A branch lopped from a fruit tree was cut into small pieces, marked and carelessly thrown down. The priest or father of the family invoked the gods, and with eyes toward heaven took up each piece three times and found a meaning. Not only the flight, but the notes of birds were of augury, as well as the neighing and snorting of white horses, "undefiled by earthly labour," and kept at the public expense. No species of augury, says Tacitus, is more unquestioningly accepted by the people, by the chiefs, and even the priests; the priests regard themselves as merely servants of the gods, while the horses (they believe) are actually acquainted with the divine mind.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Koran, XVII (IX, 11).

<sup>2</sup> *Germania*, III and X.

The ordeal likewise is a means of learning the attitude of gods. In South Guinea witches are detected by dosing the suspected person with an intoxicating drink; if it produces vertigo, so that he cannot walk through a complicated arrangement of small sticks, he is proved a witch.<sup>1</sup> "If a man has accused another of laying a *kišpu* (spell) upon him, but has not proved it," says the code of Hammurabi, "the accused shall go to the sacred river, he shall plunge into the sacred river, and if the sacred river shall conquer him, he that accused him shall take possession of his house. If the sacred river shall show his innocence and he is saved, his accuser shall be put to death. He that plunged into the sacred river shall appropriate the house of him that accused him."<sup>2</sup>

But revelations come also through human channels—it may be by the external action or success of some man. The future was foretold, among the Germans, by a combat of one of their own tribe with a captive. Or again, it was by the character of the cry of their own people, when before the battle they raised shield to mouth and sent forth a roar of valour.<sup>3</sup> This, which distantly reminds one of the saying, *vox populi vox Dei*, had its analogue in China, where the feeling and voice of the people has been taken as a sign of Heaven's attitude toward some impending act.<sup>4</sup>

Yet it is by the human mind and intelligible word that the clearest revelations come. Often the divinity has some special place where his will is expressed; as in the oracle of Ammon in Libya, or of Istar at Arbela, or in those many Greek oracles—at Delphi, Abæ, Dodôna, Branchidæ; and of Amphiaræus and Trophonius—which Cræsus is said to have consulted and found by canny test to be, for the most part, not entirely trustworthy.<sup>5</sup> At such oracles the divinity often used the priest or priestess as a mere mouthpiece, giving

<sup>1</sup> Wilson: *Western Africa*, 1856, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> Johns: *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts, and Letters*, 1904, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Germania*, III and X.

<sup>4</sup> See de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 347.

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, I, 46-48.



verbal inspiration—an occurrence doubtless connected with automatic speaking, so well known at the present day. Such direct verbal utterance from Heaven was not, however, confined to oracles. In the Koran the Lord, through Gabriel, is supposed to dictate the sacred text, though with here and there an error which the prophet must subsequently correct. And the doctrine of verbal inspiration of scripture, wherever found, rests upon a like belief.

But apart from such inner revelations through specially chosen men and at chosen places, there is all the while a growing belief in some less official and public illumination, an inner light that comes privately and directly to the person concerned. At first the influx of the divine may be sought, as we have already seen, by fasting and loneliness, by scourging and leaping, by drinks and fumes;<sup>1</sup> in these crude ways insight is to be attained, or the desired spirit is to be brought near, until it 'possesses' the devotee. And especially in visions and dreams the world of spirits may be open to men. The Gates of Dreams—the gate of horn and the gate of ivory—in Homer,<sup>2</sup> through which there comes to the inner eye of the sleeper a reality empowered to speak and act like some particular man; the visions of Jacob and of Joseph; the dream which before the birth of Cyrus portends his wide sway<sup>3</sup>—these illustrate the belief in dreams as messages from Heaven. But in sleep the person has laid aside all effort and will; the ways to the supernatural have now been opened while he was purely passive; no ritual acts were being performed, no priest was mediating between the god and the one to whom the message came. In this way receptivity comes to be an important part even of early religion, along with action; and out of this receptive side the extreme of passive reverence seems to grow, just as the punctilious observances of extreme ritualism grow out of the active side.

Yet even here such revelations are occasional, at least for most men, and seem to be a privilege of the few. It is

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 109 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Odyssey*, XIX, 562 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, I, 108.

the office of the mystics and of all who believe in the prime or sole importance of the inward light to make this direct communion between the individual and the Divine a more normal and persistent fact, to be sought by all as the one essential of religion. God comes to each heart and reveals himself there, rather than through outward occurrences or portents, or the words of other men, or even the sacraments of the church. He comes only in quietness, in stillness, and not in busy seeking.

And so, in religion that has far advanced, we find large groups of men who think lightly of all outer acts. By their belief that religion is entirely an inward thing, they stand opposed to those who lay stress upon some form of conduct. The classic dispute in the early days of the Church as to the relative value of faith and works is too familiar to need more than mention. At the one extreme were those who believed that the followers of Jesus must continue to observe all the externals of the Jewish Law; while among those opposed to them were some who felt that the liberty of the Gospel brought relief from all external requirements whatever, not alone of ceremonial but even of common morals. Thus Paul had difficulty both with Judaizing disciples and with those whose faith became so negligent of acts that their conduct soon became a public scandal.

Judaism and Christianity are sometimes set in opposition, the one as a religion of external observances, the other as of the spirit and the heart. Doubtless it is true that the centre of interest is not the same in these religions, but it is no less true that the contrast between outer and inner exists in later Judaism as it does in all advanced religion. Over against the external requirements of such books as Leviticus and Deuteronomy is the spiritual communion of the Psalms, and the call of the Prophets to repentance and humility. The Jews have had their quietists and mystics as truly as have Christians, Brahmins, and Buddhists.

But the name of 'Quietist' comes to us more directly from a small group of Christians of Germany, led by Spener,

but drawing help from the Spaniard Molinos of the seventeenth century, whose book, *The Spiritual Guide*, has been of great importance to the Society of Friends. The Quietists showed their attachment to the inner means of grace by neglecting the outer. They were careless of the Mass and the Confessional, and of all external rites and customs,<sup>1</sup> just as the Shakers, or 'Shaking Quakers,' repudiated the sacraments, professing to be influenced by no creed or custom among other Christians, but to be led by direct dictation of the Spirit of God. And in Canada, but a few years ago there appeared a strange company of Russian enthusiasts—the 'Doukhobórs' already mentioned—many of whom showed the strangest aversion to secular government, and to labour, and were ready to enter towns "in the manner of Adam and Eve." Such conduct drew wide attention to these fantastic religionists both in the New World and in their native land. "'Take up thy cross and follow me,' and to follow Christ," writes their leader Verigin, "we must live as he lived, and we see that Christ did no physical work, nor did the apostles." And before this, when insisting that man's true existence is not physical but is spiritual, he says, "And therefore, in my opinion, man need not act, but need only observe and admire what exists."<sup>2</sup> Far earlier than all these, and with a different tinge, were the 'Hesychasts,' Greek Quietists, among the monks of Mount Athos in the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The contrast of devout action and devout passivity is also well seen in the still farther Orient. The Vedas show a sense of the importance of ceremony; the gods are to be approached with physical offerings and formal prayer. In the Upanishads there appears a profound indifference to all kinds of action, or even a condemnation of acts. Knowledge and withdrawal are praised, but those who perform acts either of ceremony or of public usefulness or charity pass into

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *Golden Thoughts from 'The Spiritual Guide' of Molinos*, 1883, pp. 86, 112; Bigelow: *Molinos the Quietist*, 1882, pp. 17 f.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Maude, in *A Peculiar People*, 1905, p. 225 f.

<sup>3</sup> Shaff-Herzog: *Encycl.*, II, 984.

smoke and from smoke into night ; and, after the gods have purged them of their ' works,' they must finally begin again the weary round of life.<sup>1</sup> And evil acts do no harm. The world of the man who truly knows Indra cannot be affected by any kind of works of his own, however sinful—thieving, or murder even of his father or mother !<sup>2</sup> And likewise in the Bhagavadgîtâ contempt is at times poured on the litany and ceremony of the Vedas. Neither the chanted hymns nor penances nor gifts nor sacrifice, it is revealed, can bring one to the truth. Access to the divine comes rather by detachment, by devotion, by meditation on the indescribable.<sup>3</sup> And yet all action is not condemned without abatement. For because absolute passivity seems impossible, and often is of doubtful good, the doctrine takes this devious course : it is best at times to act, especially for purposes of sacrifice, to avoid offence to the ignorant and those who would misunderstand. Here action is better than inactivity.<sup>4</sup> Yet the act, too, should be performed entirely without attachment : the disciple is commanded to feel that he is not the real doer of his actions, but that these are all done by ' the qualities of nature.' " Forsaking all attachment to the fruit of action, always contented, dependent on none, he does nothing at all, though he engages in action." The acts are done " merely for the sake of the body," as a concession, and with an eye beyond the acts ; the acts of one who performs them in this spirit are " all destroyed."<sup>5</sup> Thus even pious action, like some outer evil, may do no harm if the heart is right. And, indeed, in the end the whole question is declared to be of small moment ; pursuit of action and renunciation of action lead to like results, though pursuit is the better of the two. He who performs either well, obtains the fruit of both. The seat which the Sâmkhyas obtain by their devoted knowledge

<sup>1</sup> *Khândogya-Upanishad*, V, 10, 3 ff. (I, 80 f.).

<sup>2</sup> *Kaushîtâki-Upanishad*, 3, 1 (Deussen : *Sechsig Upan.*, p. 44) ; cf. Müller's tr., I, 292.

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavadgîtâ*, XI, XII (VIII, 99 f.).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III (VIII, 52 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, III, IV (VIII, 53 ff.).



is reached by the Yogins also by their devoted action, since renunciation and observances have a like issue. Indeed, renunciation is difficult except by devoted observance; and when one is devoted, pious acts bring to him no taint.<sup>1</sup>

But even among those who still retained their reverence for the older Scriptures, there were opposing sects; there were those who felt that the study of the Vedas was good because it led to dutiful action; while opposed to them were those who commended Vedic study as leading to the knowledge of the highest Being. A similar contrast appears among the Buddhists, in the great schism of the Hīnayānists—those of the ‘Small Vehicle,’ and the Mahāyānists—those of the ‘Great Vehicle.’ The monastic life with its relative seclusion and passivity was the ideal of the one sect, while for the other it seemed best to lead a life of action in touch with one’s fellow-men.<sup>2</sup> The controversy, so familiar to us of the West, as to whether man is capable of contributing in any active way to his own salvation, has run its vigorous course also with people of the East. The greater number of the South Indian Vaishnavas, we are told, have split into two great opposing parties—the one maintaining that men must have absolute faith in Vishnu, which they illustrate by the kitten’s passive dependence on the hold of the mother-cat; while their antagonists maintain that man must co-operate with Vishnu—as the young monkey must hold on to the mother-monkey when she leaps from branch to branch.<sup>3</sup> The sense of the futility of human action—and a resultant passiveness—is, in a measure, but the reverse side of the belief in the sole-agency of God.

In some ways the division seems even sharper as we pass to the religion of China. The classic books of Confucianism are almost unexampled in their minute prescriptions regarding conduct of every kind. Magic practices are given,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, V (VIII, 63 ff.); cf. ch. III (VIII, 52 f.).

<sup>2</sup> de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, pp. 522 f., 618 f.

<sup>3</sup> Monier-Williams: *Modern India and the Indians*, 1887, p. 192.

as well as those that are religious ; and religious rites mingle with what we should regard as moral action ; until we find ourselves amid things that for us would be mere social etiquette or household prudence—the spirit of the sage and prophet descends to the level of Lord Chesterfield, and, finally, to that of a writer of a cookery book. How to flavour soup or to eat it ungulpingly ; when properly to disparage to a guest one's own dinner,<sup>1</sup> or which hand to use in presenting to another a horse, and which hand a dog ;<sup>2</sup> and whether the husband of a maternal cousin should wear mourning for the wife of a maternal uncle<sup>3</sup>—the proprieties here are set forth with the same gravity as are the rites for the worship of ancestors and of the spirits of Earth and Sky. The interest and scruple of conduct has become almost a mental disease. Just the contrary spirit is in that Chinese sect of Buddhists who on account of their renunciation and passivity have been called the Do-Nothing sect (Wu-wei).<sup>4</sup> And this spirit runs through the chief canonical book of the religion, known as Tào-ism. Lâu-tze, the great Leader, declares that he lacks all the activities of other men ; he seems to be merely drifting.<sup>5</sup> “ The kingdom is a spirit-like thing,” he tells us, “ and cannot be got by active doing. He who would so win it destroys it ; he who would hold it in his grasp loses it.”<sup>6</sup> The positive and active virtues are of no avail and had better be renounced.<sup>7</sup> They begin to appear as men decline spiritually, as they begin to lose the true Way ; then come the ‘ proprieties ’ of which Confucius thinks so much, and with them enter grave disorders.<sup>8</sup> Those who follow the true Way—Tào—are, like the Quakers, opposed to bearing arms<sup>9</sup>—the hard is to be broken by the soft, the best action is inaction.<sup>10</sup> Not by

<sup>1</sup> Lî K'î, I, 1, 3, 5 (XXVII, 81).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 4, 17 f. (XXVII, 85).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 1, 3, 40 (XXVII, 146).

<sup>4</sup> de la Saussaye : *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 630.

<sup>5</sup> Tào Teh King, I, 20 (XXXIX, 63).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 (XXXIX, 72), Legge's tr.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 (XXXIX, 62).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 31 (XXXIX, 73).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 38 (XXXIX, 80).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 43 (XXXIX, 87).

outward things nor by outward actions is the Way to be followed : the true view is to be had without leaving your door, all things can be seen without so much as looking out of one's window. The farther anyone goes from himself the less he knows.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tào Teh King, 47 (XXXIX, 89).

## CHAPTER XII

### THE INNER SOURCES OF PASSIVITY

WITH the character of reverent inaction made somewhat definite by what has gone before, its ground and motive should be examined.

Passivity is often but a farther following of that way which is already familiar as Renunciation. For religious avoidance need not be merely of external goods. Having turned from all things outward, the withdrawal may then pass inward, and direct its forbidding look toward the common activities of the mind. Not simply must desire and passion then be checked, but the condemnation may fall on all forms of mental action. Doubtless there is at first the intention to check and annul merely those activities that seem less devout—futilities of recollection and of hope, day-dreaming that distracts from the interests of the spirit, the planning of merely worldly success and honour. The self must be freed from these, to contemplate unhindered the eternal world. But once this process of rooting out the needless is begun, it often loses sight of all niceties of difference. Especially when all natural and human matters are regarded as evil, or at least worthless, and the spiritual is thought of as different in kind from the natural life, and as lying utterly distinct and apart from this world, then piety, which would turn its back on all that is not eternal, has no proper action of its own remaining except, perhaps, this turning. Life then becomes a study of destruction, not of the body alone, nor of the desire to gratify the sensual nature, but of all desire and effort and interest whatsoever,



save the one interest in a spiritual state all indistinct and motionless. Quietude, especially in the Orient, rests on the contempt for all that is finite and particular. But since finitude and particularity are not found in outer things alone, but also in our acts whether outer or inner, renunciation of the unworthy must include a ceasing from action even within. The Western passivist still believes in inner experience as having the essence of the divine. The Eastern passivist often finds this, too, but finite and delusive. The holy rest is not even a movement all within ; it is stillness absolute.

To say that mystics lay stress on feeling as the element in man through which he can best approach divinity is thus no full account. The emptiness that seems to many the nearest approach to God is often, in its ideal at least, not even feeling, any more than thought. It is a blank form which might still be called existence, but from which all substance and contents have utterly disappeared. Contempt is heaped on morality, not only as an external thing, but as internal ; despicable is all preference, all purpose, all enjoyment—all consciousness in any and every form. Here in the region of emotion and of will there thus takes place a movement similar to one which is so familiar in the intellectual realm. As thought seems to some a limit and restraint, an essentially cramping and belittling thing ; and, in consequence, is unable to bring before us what is greatest and most real ; so feeling and purpose are often by the mystic regarded as of like impotence to bring man near to Unity and Truth.

The character of religious passivity might be better understood were we to see its connection with different strains of human nature. There are men whose impressions readily pass over into action. Every sensation and whatever else arises in the mind is, at its very birth, seized upon and forced to be part of some intention. And in intentions or purposes we are but showing ourselves active, perhaps aggressive, toward our surroundings. The opposite type

of mind organizes its life in a different way. What appears before the mind need not here contribute to a purpose ; for purposes or intentions are now not dominant, but are themselves subdued and made tributary to states of feeling and thought. It is customary in some of our recent psychology to regard muscular activity as the end and aim of all things ; and such a description fits, in a way, the commoner style of mind. But this must not conceal the other type, whose energies run more to appreciation and reflection, where the force is spent within and seems pure passivity, although there is no absolute passivity as long as there is life. Such contemplative minds are more apt to see the ideal under the form of beauty or of logical self-sufficiency, rather than of creative power and governmental force. And by its very nature such an Ideal, in return, seems to claim the appreciative rather than the active side of man.

It would be but little more than putting the same thought in another form were we to say that by far the larger part of mankind habitually identify both themselves and others with what can be seen and outwardly accomplished ; while a contrasting group, though never able to cut themselves completely off from such externals, yet set more store by the thoughts and feelings of men. The real person is here felt to be the man unseen, and there is a value in situations only imagined, in mere longings, in purposes which move toward no outer goal. Robert Louis Stevenson in a letter to Archer well illustrates the type. "To me, morals, the conscience, the affections, and the passions are, I will own frankly and sweepingly, so infinitely more important than the other parts of life, that I conceive men rather triflers who become immersed in the latter." And then he adds : "To me, the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents ; they do not colour my view of life."<sup>1</sup> The opposition of type we are here considering has also been brought out by Binet in some ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, ed. Colvin, 1899, I, 440 f.

periments upon his two girls, Marguerite and Armande—the one living in a world of common, sensible fact, the other in a region of sentiment, of memory, and imagination.<sup>1</sup> Here, under like outward circumstance and training, appears the same contrast which is found in the world at large between the practical men of affairs, and the dreamers—musicians, poets, seers. Each class finds it difficult to understand the other, although occasionally a man is born to both orders of life, like Leonardo da Vinci.

Even among scientists something of this contrast may be discerned ; although here we have already entered a region where normal free activity is much restrained. The kind of mind which feels at home only among things that can be seen and handled, if it enters a scientific career takes to the study of minerals, the earth, the behaviour of solids and fluids, of plants and the bodies of animals and men. The opposite type is apt to find such studies relatively dull, and turns instead to the great fields that are more intimate with human feelings, with ideas and ideals—mathematics, logic, history, politics, æsthetics, metaphysics. It is traditional to think of mathematics as peculiarly hard and unvital ; yet when one associates with mathematicians, and compares them with men whose sympathies are more with physical science, he is struck with the freer inner life, not far from poetry, which often seems to go with high mathematical talent. The mathematicians are the mystics of science, moving about in worlds not realized, and seem guarded from that atrophy of æsthetic feeling which Darwin, in later life, noted in himself with regret. This difference of mental constitution which leads some men to the sciences that have in the forefront observation and the manual control of apparatus, while others are attracted to sciences whose more exclusive instrument is critical reflection, helps to explain the recurrent coolness between natural science and philosophy. And among philosophers themselves the broad division between empiricist and rationalist, between

<sup>1</sup> Binet : *L'étude expérimentale de l'intelligence*, 1903.

materialist and idealist, is perhaps connected with this variation of response—as of those different parts of plants, that grow, some toward and others away from earth ; or those animals, some seeking while others shun the light. Of those who, by the very fact of becoming philosophers, have turned from the world of action and possession, some look back, and the old fondness is reawakened. The idealist is, by this test, the only true philosopher ; for in him the type comes to its purity : he is of inward interest not only in setting his heart upon an inner and speculative life, but, still further, in that he makes this inner life to be the very stuff of which the outer universe is made. To most men, with their sense of value and reality so differently adjusted, this seems too fantastic for serious thought ; it is refuted, as by Dr. Johnson, by stamping on the floor. Idealism seems an attempt to construct the world from the stuff of dreams.

But the outer world, which to the natural man seems the most real of all things, may to others appear after all not unlike a dream. The sense of reality is one of the many mysterious things about the mind—what it is, and why its changefulness. One often hears the question asked, whether beauty exists without, or lies only in our appreciation. But the *realness* of things is a no less subtle quality, and seems to require some nicety of adjustment in us, if we are to feel it as others do. Certainly in dreaming there is often given us this feeling of reality hardly diminished. And in the waking state some disturbance of the mind may draw all substance from things seen and heard and handled, leaving them the thinnest shadows. Mental disease may bring with it this sense of unreality in an extreme form, where all the world seems utterly detached and shadowy.<sup>1</sup> This is doubtless due to some mysterious alteration, not of the outer senses, but of the feelings, and of the power to bring the particulars of experience mentally into some connection with the central node of interest. For this

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., James : *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902, pp. 63 ff. ; Town : " Three Delusional States," *Psychological Clinic*, I, 198 ff.



reason even the gossamer of dreams seems real so long as it holds together and possesses without dispute the whole field of consciousness and the attention. The dream floats off on waking, because now a web of experience comes in, with which it can offer no successful rivalry, which at once stirs in us a lively interest in its pattern of fuller meaning. Some would affirm that this greater significance of certain things, which makes us call them real, is due to their power to compel us to action. Whether this or its opposite is true—whether the action may be quite as much a *result* of the sense of importance, as its *cause*—we may leave for others to discuss. But for understanding the religions of passivity and of action, it is interesting to note that action and passion are closely joined with changes in the feeling of what is real. And religion, which is the great assertion of what is most real and of most importance in the universe is also the great incentive and disturber of action. When it gives added value to this life, and stirs our appreciative powers, in making it appear an appanage of Heaven, then it makes action vigorous. But when the brilliancy of the Ideal makes the eyes incapable of seeing colour or worth in the world about, then passivity is the natural outcome. Religion, which must always, sooner or later, shift the centre of value farther from the facts of vegetative and sensuous life, does by that very fact give some shift and disturbance of the centre of reality and of the focal point of action. With the passivists this transfer of the sense of reality away from the seen, and forward to the unseen, has been carried to the uttermost. The perceived world grows less and less important, until its hard reality passes off into a filmy tissue of illusion. For many of the mystics the world is thus but a passing show. “By and by comes the great awakening, and then we find out that this life is really a great dream,” says the Chinese Chuang Tzŭ; “Fools think they are awake now, and flatter themselves they know if they are really princes or peasants. Confucius and you are both dreams; and I who say you are dreams—I am but

a dream myself.”<sup>1</sup> “All is empty, all the world is like a phantasy,” we are told in a Chinese version of the Buddha’s life.<sup>2</sup> The fading away of the reality of this world, which in the pathological may be due to a deadening of feeling and a failure of interest everywhere, is due in the case of religion to no lack of feeling or want of interest, but to their complete absorption in a world apart from common life.

But often the shift of the sense of value is in another direction. When man turns his look from himself to the majesty of God, there is still an outwardness of interest. But it is not outward in the sense of being directed toward the showy, the superficial. It is away from the self, as friendship is away, in that it is unselfish. Passivity may also spring, however, not from a contempt of all that man can do, but from an exaggerated value set upon the self. The self is so precious that at all cost it must be protected and brought to perfect independence.

Such an exaggerated self-importance does not, however, normally lead to inaction, but to the opposite. When one feels this inner value, and that a heritage so precious must not be left to the uncertainty of chance dependence, there are opposite ways along which this feeling leads. More often the person becomes domineering, and seeks to attain true independence by making the world’s will bend to his. The self can be content if it can bring things into harmony with itself, by subjugating and impressing upon them a new form ; such conquering egotism has often been ascribed to Bonaparte. But the self in its egotism may seek independence by retreat as well as by giving battle. How shall I attain my ends ? By having none for the world to defeat. How may craving be completely stilled ? Not by seeking what is desired, but by killing desire itself. Repression of all the natural impulses is here the way of freedom, and thus passivity again is reached, but by a somewhat different path. Such motives, while not the only ones, were strong in

<sup>1</sup> Chuang Tzū : tr. Giles, 1889, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, IV, 18 (XIX, 204 f.).

Stoicism with its quiet acceptance of whatever the world might bring, its discovery of virtue in the balance and dignity of a quiet inner life. These motives were also strong in that more exalted and emotional stoicism of Buddha: "Stop then, the end by choking up the source. Desire not either life or its opposite; the raging fire of birth, old age, and death burns up the world on every side."<sup>1</sup> By the power within himself, and by help of none else, each is to attain that bliss in which all action, all feeling, all thought has passed away.<sup>2</sup> Thus there is here self-glorying that works to the same end as self-contempt. In this strange manner extremes meet, and passivity here comes from the very study of self-possession and the rooting-out of the deepest social feeling; for others it comes of self-effacement, of an overpowering sense of the importance of others, a sense of man's dependence upon a Power not himself, that works for righteousness.

At its extremity, then, the love of independence may appear exactly like the love of dependence, both of which are strong in human nature and come to fullness in religion. It is difficult for the stalwart champions of individual freedom to believe that any can be so low as to enjoy and intellectually approve the dependence of themselves. Yet this feeling is certainly present in some men and in many women, and is perhaps the greatest obstacle in the way of those who would arouse women to take their 'rights.' The privilege of having someone else to bear the brunt and worry of events doubtless is enjoyed by that feminine side which belongs to normal men. It helps to reconcile so many to fatalism and predestination. It is also no small incentive to passivity in religion. The temptation to enjoy the bliss of doing nothing, knowing that another is the very Agent, must be one to which some natures are peculiarly unguarded. At once the care and fret of the tangled skein of things is handed over to another; as though weak Hamlet had

<sup>1</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, IV, 18, 1447 (XIX, 204 f.).

<sup>2</sup> See p. 34.

suddenly found some nobler and stronger kinsman to right the wrong. This relief, which in some measure is a rightful consolation of religion, in the passivist goes farther; it becomes a shirking of responsibility. The divine presence, which is the proper supplement where our own powers begin to fail, becomes an occasion for sloth, or for carelessness of the quality of action. The lawless conduct of the Antinomian with his contempt for common morals, which has so often disgraced religion, is thus a way in which this untempered spirit of irresponsibility may work itself out in natures that have no leaning toward passivity. Religion, which on the whole is a great support of morals, may by making too little of human power and responsibility lead back to utter looseness, especially where passion is stirred to its depths. The laxity of practical morals—of which Uchimura complains among the converts of Japan,<sup>1</sup> and which has been known in New England and even in Palestine—is thus like reverent passivity in that it sets small value upon actions. It is part of that abuse and aberration to which all good things are subject.

With the sense that quietness is the soul of life, there often goes, too, an amazing mistrust of change. Apparently there is in human character a strange polarity by which some crave change while others dread it. Those who praise inaction seem moved to do so partly from the dislike of the mere *disturbance* which goes with deeds. If one acts, he must in some measure violate the present order, must seize upon it and shake it into another form. And he who even in his piety is conservative to the heart and hates upheaval, will here find occasion for avoiding acts. Indeed, change and variety and difference are objects of aversion to many, as marks of finitude and evil. The Chinese mystic Chuang Tzŭ regards evil as a kind of confusion. The causes of the loss of man's original rightness, he holds, are five in number: "The five colours confuse the eye, and the eyes fail to see clearly. The five sounds confuse the ear, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Diary* [1895], p. 93.



ear fails to hear accurately. The five scents confuse the nose, and obstruct the sense of smell. The five tastes cloy the palate, and vitiate the sense of taste. Finally, likes and dislikes cloud the understanding, and cause dispersion of the original nature. These five are the banes of life.”<sup>1</sup> And for the Buddha, at least as he appears in some of the sacred literature, it is the *change* of things that seems the most pitiable feature of them: “Impermanence is the nature of all that exists, constant change and restlessness its conditions; unfixed, unprofitable, without the marks of long endurance.”<sup>2</sup> And again he says, apparently with pity: “All things around us bear the stamp of instant change; born, they perish; no self-sufficiency; those who would wish to keep them long, find in the end no room for doing so. If things around us could be kept for aye, and were not liable to change or separation, then this would be salvation.”<sup>3</sup> We here have the thought—unusual, especially in a moralist—that it is the mere changefulness of the things about us, rather than any other quality or insufficiency in them that makes them unworthy of desire. If the one element, variation, could only be expelled, peace would be attained. And so the devotee must seek the changeless state. The wise man’s learning, then, is “to acquire the changeless body; for where no change is, there is peace. Thus the possession of this changeful body is the foundation of all sorrow.”<sup>4</sup> And while at times there comes the passing thought of a changeless existence, of a mystical world that cannot be destroyed,<sup>5</sup> yet the chief consolation, after all, is in the thought that complete destruction will bring complete rest. The disciples are told to give not way again to sorrow, because complete destruction of the universe must come.<sup>6</sup> And after the Nirvana of Buddha, a Devaputra

<sup>1</sup> Chuang Tzū, tr. Giles, 1889, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, V, 24, 1880 (XIX, 274).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 1862 f. (XIX, 271).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 20, 1654 (XIX, 238).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, cf. V, 27, 2207 (XIX, 324).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 26, 2097 (XIX, 306).

sounded forth in the midst of space the sad, triumphant message :

“Impermanency is the nature of all things, quickly born, they quickly die.

With birth there comes the rush of sorrows, only in quiet extinction is there joy.”<sup>1</sup>

To the Western mind such desires would seem almost incomprehensible ; for with many of us change seems almost the *summum bonum*, and monotony the chief of evils. Indeed, there has been some want of sympathy with the earlier Christian pictures of Heaven just because too little provision was made for activity and progressive change and serious endeavour ; it seemed too much a place of rest. From this and from the fluctuations which we observe in ourselves—since in some states of mind mere rest seems bliss, while at other times it is intolerable—we can well believe that there are types of character that are permanently magnetized in opposite ways. That type which at its best shows a noble restlessness, becomes in its pettier instances a thirst for continual happening and excitement, such as city life supplies. While even with us the opposite temper appears in those whose delight is to live lifelong away in some quiet valley. The normal balance of movement and rest shows in many men a variety of proportion, and in some there almost ceases to be any proportion at all, since they seem to desire permanently nothing but repose *or* change.

Now for the lovers of the changeless, the inner life offers a better refuge than the outer. The world of men is petulant and fickle ; and even Nature, though calm in fixed mountains and in starry heavens, is still fitful in winds and storms and seasons, and in the restless sea. But in the inner life, if one could only bring to subjection the passions and all vagrant images and thoughts—and they look as if they

<sup>1</sup> Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King, V, 27, 2116 f. (XIX, 309), using the marginal tr.

might be subdued—there is promise of repose. In the dull drone of organic feeling, or the still deeper undertone of sentiment that often remains the same for life, or in the fixity of moral interest or of intellectual linkage, there is an air of permanence that seems to offer the longed-for rest. The mind affirms that within itself it finds a closer likeness to the Ideal which is unchanging. Or, rather, here within is felt the very presence of the Ideal itself. The passivist thus finds something nearer his heart's desire by withdrawal from the acts and changes of the world.

The more naïve attitude is to accept growth and change and action as a matter of course, and to withhold no admiration because of them, but rather the reverse. The gods in Homer are born and have their plans and disappointments, their defeats and successes. The Ideal here is a world of movement. But while movement need not disappear from the ideal world even of the most enlightened, yet we do find along with and underneath the movement an ever-growing sense of permanence, until with some the permanence completely drives out all change and inner motion. The stern sense of Unity, as against number and variety in the Divine, is in part but an aspect of this appreciation of fixity, which, in its effort to exclude clash and discord and distraction, often excludes the very elements of life, its inner play and richness. As character develops, it lays more stress on law and order, on purposes that are not in need of constant readjustment; on principles—like those for computation and for the scientific understanding of men and nature—that do not for ever require to be revised. And thus the Ideal seems, more and more, to reveal a unitary and changeless character. Those who make changelessness the supreme and only good are thus peculiarly responsive to one side of the Ideal; and the worshippers of change are appreciative of the other.

The height to which changelessness is elevated in the character of Divinity is thus a sign of the distress with which change is regarded. But in its turn the insistence on the

unchanging features in the Divine reacts upon human character, moulding it by imitation. If God has no need beyond himself—if he is self-existent, self-contained, unmoving, without desire—then it seems fit and honourable for men to be like him in their want of action. They, too, in rest are coming nearer to that state which is above the pettiness of time. Thus the conscious imitation of the ideal peace must be numbered among the many causes which unite to bring about quietness in religion. The passivist moreover lives as if for him the great defect of many religionists were their failure to keep themselves in check, and let the divine energy have free course—and as if in his own way he were intent to set a right example by doing justice to the receptive, the respectful, the unofficial side of worship. Often, however, there is no thought of being an example to anyone. The quiet life is the direct and uncritical outcome of character and of sensitiveness to the ideal, uncompensated by powers of practical expression.

For there appear in life two distinct results which feeling may produce. It may lead to heightened action, as where fear gives fleetness—this where the emotion is not too great to block the exits. Or it may, when in greater volume, or in minds and brains whose channels of discharge are less capacious, produce an instant stoppage and something of that death-like stillness which often comes with supreme and sudden danger. This, doubtless, is part of the explanation of religious quietness, when it is not a studied thing. Yet it would be incautious to make such a feature too prominent, when we recall from how many sources religious passivity comes—from self-poise, as well as from its loss; from stoic self-sufficiency, as well as from a sense that we are as nothing in the presence of the Divine, and that our actions may well cease, sharing as they do the worthlessness of all that is human and mundane; from an interest somehow divorced from the external world, whereby this is left a kind of phantasm, powerless to compel our action; from a native immobility of interest and attention,



an unreadiness of readjustment, leading to grave discomfort in the present of change of any kind.

At the close of this part of the study, it might be well, even at the risk of wearying by repetition, to review the features more prominent in religious action and in the attitude of religion toward action. When religion becomes disengaged from sorcery and attains a certain dignity of its own, ceremonial comes to occupy a large place in man's intercourse with divinity, and finds support because it answers to many inner needs. But with all its ministry, there are cravings which it fails to satisfy ; and many men turn from it to act in ways that are useful to their fellows, and this turning away is due to many motives other than a love of men.

Besides the forces leading to an attitude like this, religious action comes under other influences. It is affected by what I have called the feminine and the masculine temper—timid of change and action, and eager for it. There is, moreover, for many reasons, an overmastering desire to retain old forms of action, even though they be stifling all that is vital ; while against this is the spirit, especially manifest in the great leaders, the reformers, that would bring to freedom the life behind the act. Religious action is affected, too, by the different values which men place upon what is particular and finite, and by their attention or inattention to the particular. For inasmuch as action is always special and here and now, then, if men have an eye only to the boundless, there is no longer any occasion or object of endeavour. And men act more vigorously if they think action not beneath them, nor yet entirely above them and coming solely from God—though the thought that all is predestined does not of itself make men passive.

Thus a deep cleft has appeared in the ways of access to divinity. For some, there is an interest outward and a striving for external accomplishment pleasing to the gods. For others the attention goes wholly to the unseen, and no

value is set upon all this outer show ; in quietness now is strength. Opposed to the religion of effort and the outward look is that of quiet and the inward look. For the one type, life appears to call for deeds ; it is a warriors' field. For the other, the better part of living is found only as one checks his hindering struggle to attain the good, and lets this flow in upon him. Here the true form even of earthly society is a church receptive, a church at rest.

This distrust of acts, however, is clearly but a side, a negative side, of the full state of mind. With it and completing it, there is usually the desire of *knowledge*. Reverent men turn from outward activity, for the most part, because of a longing for an inner light, indeed often an inner free activity, which mere conduct seems to hinder. But whether this knowledge seem an active grasp of the truth, or seem an illumination while they are passive, in either case we are already within the confines of *thought*. The further course of our study takes us to this inward process of the intellect.

PART III

CONFLICTS IN REGARD TO RELIGIOUS  
THOUGHT





## CHAPTER XIII

### SOME STAGES OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

AMONG the powers stirred by the presence of greatness, thought plays an important, though perhaps no dominant, rôle. Yet if we can trace carefully its action the whole of religion will better be understood. So our interest through all the chapters following will be upon the character of the thought that appears in religion, and of the influences that give it form. And to that end first of all some of the changing appearances of thought in this region should be illustrated—thought's vigorous eminence in some forms of reverence, and again its appearance dim and scarcely discernible either because not yet set apart and cultivated or because stifled by rank overgrowth of that amongst which it must live.

Myths are hardly intellectual in the sense in which most men understand the word; for usually they are the uncritical, spontaneous setting-forth of thought in stories. Yet faint traces of intellect in religion are already noticeable in myth, the theology of early men. The religious thought here concealed does not exist in the form of judgment and reasoning only, but in the form of ideas of many degrees and kinds, and conjoined in ways with which logic has but little interest or sympathy. Only with a catholic and tolerant sense of what is meant by thought, or intelligence, can one notice its rich abundance in this realm of religious story.

Yet the myths which deal with the great courses of

nature show occasionally thought reaching almost the border of science. The representation of heaven and earth as a wedded pair is derived in part at least from an intellectual perception of likeness—from personification guided by analogy. Men notice that the earth becomes fruitful by the influence of the sky with its light and warmth, its dew and rain; and since a most striking instance of fruitful energy is seen in human generation, early men think of natural fertility as a marriage of the elements. And this is the beginning of the scientific spirit—the interest in causes and in explanation; for there is here a crude theory of an observed fact, namely that the earth brings forth abundantly. The mystery of nature's fruitfulness is thus solved and simplified by regarding it as a process like that involved in human birth. In this the savage naïvely follows the method of the savant who is pleased to make some novel and puzzling fact appear as but another instance of a group of facts already known. The explanatory interest is an important feature in all myths that tell how the world was formed—by clever workmanship of some god, busy at his forge or his potter's wheel; or it was fished from the sea with hook and line, or it issued from a gigantic egg. Again, some special process of nature may be explained; as the tides, in the Malay myth, by the regular emerging of an enormous crab from a cavern in the depths of the sea, and his return to this cavern;<sup>1</sup> or the winds, in the Iroquois myth, by the struggles of a great captive spirit, whose frantic efforts set all the air in motion.<sup>2</sup> The explanatory interest is more concealed in myths like those of Proserpina or Osiris, which are supposed to represent the death of vegetation; yet here, too, are ideas made familiar by human life, but carried by imagination to a greatness exceeding man's.

Often the myth is not explanatory at all, but is perhaps a gratifying and imaginative enlargement of familiar

<sup>1</sup> Skeat: *Malay Magic*, 1900, pp. 6 f.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan: *League of the Iroquois*, 1851, pp. 159 f.

human adventure, as when the hero goes hunting for some enchanted moose, or for a fire-breathing stallion. Or the myth may set forth in story and picture some form of primitive belief—as when in the Finnish tale<sup>1</sup> the hair-brush of Lemminkainen bleeds when he is mortally wounded—an instinctive representation of that union of fortune which is supposed to exist between a man and his near possessions.

Indeed, the myth-makers are all the while unconsciously expressing in their stories their own belief—and chief of all, that life and the forms and motives of conscious intercourse are the deepest facts of the universe. Involuntarily the early mind regards the whole world, which for us is partly animate and partly inanimate, as living, through and through, and for the most part like man himself. The winds driving the rain-clouds are heroes driving before them cows with flowing udders. The sun is a great adventurer who slays the dragon night.

But not only does thought lie hidden in the stories of early men, but it appears more openly, as a recognized means of accomplishment. The approach to this is doubtless gradual; and before thought is sought out and viewed as potent, other actions of the man have come to be respected. The hand, the eye, the voice, the word articulate, are early perceived to be powerful for good or ill. But deeper than these, some hidden power within is felt to be still mightier.

Among certain Indian tribes the women assemble when the men are away and in peril; and by fixing their thoughts upon the absent ones and expressing these thoughts in song, they send strength to their warriors and help them to victory.<sup>2</sup> Maximilian heard among the Mandans how prayer had first arisen. Attacked by their enemies, they needed the help of their great forefather who had gone far

<sup>1</sup> Kalevala, Rune XV (Crawford, 201 f.).

<sup>2</sup> Fletcher: *Indian Story and Song*, 1900, pp. 81 ff.; *Indians' Book* ed. Curtis, 1907, p. 102.

into the west. One of their number proposed to send a bird to him ; but no bird could fly so far. Another believed that the absent one might be reached by glance of the eye, but the prairie and the hills set bounds to the eye. Then spoke a third : " Thoughts are the surest means of reaching him." Whereupon he prostrated himself, wrapped in his buffalo-skin, and said : " I think.—I have thought.—I return." He threw aside the skin, bathed in sweat, and the longed-for Helper came.<sup>1</sup> The gods of the Rig-Veda create Agni by the power of their minds, by their thoughts ;<sup>2</sup> by right thought, Agni is pressingly brought hither to help men ;<sup>3</sup> the immortals have created treasure by their thought.<sup>4</sup> And with the Zarathustrans the powers of mind are distinctly named as worthy of worship : " We worship the perception ; we worship the intellect ; we worship the conscience."<sup>5</sup> And if words be revered, not as having magic power in themselves, but because they are close to the thoughts that lie behind them, then there is some reverence to thought also when the Word incarnate is held in honour : Sraosha, ' holy and strong,' is ' the incarnate Word ' ;<sup>6</sup> and mention is made of " Karesa, the son of Zbaurvant, who was the incarnate Word, mighty speared and lordly."<sup>7</sup> But still more concretely is the power of mind presented in the Kalevala as working magically through its knowledge of causes : the mere statement of the source and origin of any mischievous power breaks its spell. The bleeding Wainamoinen comes to a cottage to ask if anyone there can heal his wound. An old man seated on the hearth answers, that greater things than this have been done—*islands raised, bays formed, cataracts checked—by telling of their causes.* And accordingly the flow of Wainamoinen's blood is stanchd by telling of the origin

<sup>1</sup> Waitz : *Anthropologie*, III, 206.

<sup>2</sup> Vedic Hymns, III, 2, 3 (XLVI, 228).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 6 (XLVI, 296).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 1, 10 (XLVI, 308).

<sup>5</sup> Zend-Avesta, Farvardin Yast, 74 (XXIII, 197).

<sup>6</sup> Srôsh Yast, 5, 18 (XXIII, 165).

<sup>7</sup> Farvardin Yast, 106 (XXIII, 209).



of Iron, whence came the wound.<sup>1</sup> One of the threats, too, made against the Frost-Fiend is, that Lemminkainen will sing this fiend's origin.<sup>2</sup> And the same Lemminkainen is powerless against the dragon that guards the castle of Pohyola, until the hero sings the origin of the dragon from the spittle of Suoyatar.<sup>3</sup> The utterance of the secret knowledge of causation is thus the most powerful spell that can be used. Here is a dim intuition of the mastery which comes of understanding—comes of knowing, not some purely meaningless formula, as in common incantation, but the source and nature of the power that is to be controlled. In these early fancies we find traces of the scientific impulse, unseparated as yet from poetry and religion.

As men and religion grow older and more reflective, there comes to be seen some difference between knowledge or thought that is spontaneous or unlaboured, and that which is more clearly of effort and the will. And religion is far readier to see the value of spontaneous or intuitional thought than of critical and self-conscious thinking. But in time there comes into the acknowledged service of religion the intelligence that can no longer be an impulsive play, but must move more by rule, and under the stern eye of Logic.

The self-conscious thinkers may give their days and nights to theology, either by attempts directly to advance the science, or by an untiring interest in the work of those who lead the way. The essence of religion, for them, is to have right conceptions and beliefs; and they often picture to themselves the Divinity as far more anxious about men's thoughts than about their feelings and intents. The Scotch, from whom so many disputants have sprung, have always been religious in an intellectual way. Their old-time Sabbaths, with an unbroken line of argumentative sermons, clearly show this element in their devotion. America, which Scotland and its ways of thought have greatly influenced, reveals the type less clearly; for the moving of home, with

<sup>1</sup> Kalevala, Runes VIII and IX.

<sup>2</sup> Rune XXX.

<sup>3</sup> Rune XXVI.

all its cares, has encouraged activity, at some drain upon reflection. Yet among the New England Puritans religion was, in a large measure, unquestionably an intellectual attachment to the Good, it was largely a matter of contemplation, of reasoning, of creed. In the earlier days, too, of Christianity there could be found those for whom religion was largely a way of thinking. The Gnostics were notable among them, with their claim to clearer mental light, and their zest for attacking in philosophic spirit the doctrinal problems which Christianity had started.

But Christians as well as those of other faith have also shown a different order of mind—where there has been less of the clank of logical machinery and yet no less of thought, even if it be smooth-running and unsupervised. The powers which the person more clearly recognizes as his own are now held in check, and the thought seems to come from without. This leads him, rightly or wrongly, to disclaim responsibility for his intuitions; he feels that there has come to him a divine illumination. Mohammed, when men sneered at the Koran and asked to have some different revelation, said: "It is not for me to change it of my own accord; I do not follow aught but what I am inspired with; verily, I fear, if I rebel against my Lord, the torment of a mighty day!"<sup>1</sup> And if errors crept into the Prophet's message, they were not of him, but of Satan.<sup>2</sup> There is little reason to doubt that this correctly describes his feeling of the uncontrollable character of his utterances.

And yet, so far as there are contents in the inspiration—so far as it is a real message, having significance—it is no mere stir of feeling, but has invaded what psychologists are fond of calling the cognitive region of the mind. The definite form and meaning of the inspiration or vision, the ideas gained perhaps through the voices heard—these intellectual features are to be distinguished from the feeling which may or may not be their accompaniment. This intellectual element often seems to stand above the emo-

<sup>1</sup> Koran, X (VI, 194).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XXII (IX, 62).

tional, and religion to be governed by the head rather than by the heart. For even mystics are by no means all emotion; the length and intelligibility of the revelations they receive are clear evidence of the play of intellect. And often there is a suppression of excitement, or even something like the calm of untroubled sleep, and the memory upon awakening retains, well-ordered, the great situation, the sights and sounds, with the reflections of the entranced person himself—as in the case of the <sup>h</sup><sub>ad</sub> Monk of Evesham.<sup>1</sup> But perhaps the best instance of mysticism with intellectual fibre is found in Swedenborg. The man whose early life was devoted to studies in science shows the temper suitable to this in his religious visions. Heaven and Hell are described, chapter on chapter, in the spirit of a scientist reporting observations to some Royal Society. Nothing could well be calmer or more ‘objective’ than the way in which he depicts even the passions of good and evil spirits. Save for the subject matter, one might seem to be reading some tractate of the schools.

Signs of this same intellectual spirit, though much obscured, appear in religions of the Orient. The religious classics of India speak constantly in praise of knowledge, in the persuasion that salvation comes only by its attainment. Certain rules of the Buddhists lay down, among the conditions of welfare for their community, that they must be active in mind, that they must “exercise themselves in the sevenfold higher wisdom,” which includes, among other things, mental activity, the search after truth, and earnest contemplation; they must exercise themselves in “the sevenfold perception due to earnest thought.”<sup>2</sup> And the value placed upon intelligence, although not excluding a carefulness of conduct, is shown in places like the following, the substance of which is repeated like a refrain: “And whilst the Blessed One stayed there at Râgagaha on the Vulture’s Peak he held that comprehensive religious

<sup>1</sup> *The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham*, 1196, reprint. 1895.

<sup>2</sup> Mahâ-Parinibbâna-Sutta, I, 9 f. (XI, 9 f.).

talk with the brethren on the nature of upright conduct, and of earnest contemplation, and of intelligence. 'Great is the fruit, great the advantage of earnest contemplation when set round with upright conduct. Great is the fruit, great the advantage of intellect when set round with earnest contemplation. The mind set round with intelligence is freed from the great evils, that is to say, from sensuality, from individuality, from delusion, and from ignorance!'<sup>1</sup> The importance of knowledge—indeed, its inclusion of all the elements of worship—is well illustrated also from the 'Divine Song': "The sacrifice of knowledge, O terror of your foes! is superior to the sacrifice of wealth; for action, O Son of Prithâ! is wholly and entirely comprehended in knowledge. Even if you are the most sinful of all sinful men, you will cross over all trespasses by means of the boat of knowledge alone. As a fire well-kindled, O Arguna! reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes. For there is in this world no means of sanctification like knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

That the Indian had a strong leaning toward intellectual activity could not well be doubted by anyone even slightly acquainted with the Upanishads, where religion and subtle reflection merge. Yet we must be on our guard against interpreting this expression 'knowledge,' so prominent in Indian reverence, as though it meant what we should call pure intellect or reason. For in the Bhagavadgîtâ, from which we have just heard such praise of knowledge as might have been uttered by some ardent rationalist, there is included under knowledge, not only what we of the West would regard as proper to it, but matters that to our minds seem foreign to knowledge—cleanliness, and aversion toward assemblages!

Some of the more careful directions for attaining knowledge will give a clearer idea of what is meant. The sage "excludes from his mind external objects, concentrates the

<sup>1</sup> Mahâ-Parinibbâna-Sutta, I, 12 (XI, 11), and in other places, e.g. I, 18 (XI, 14 f.).

<sup>2</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, IV (VIII, 62), w. omiss.



visual power between the brows, and making the upward and downward life-breaths even, confines their movements within the nose.”<sup>1</sup> He is to fix “his seat firmly in a clean place, not too high nor too low, and covered over with a sheet of cloth, a deer-skin, and blades of Kusa grass,” is to hold his mind “exclusively on one point, with the workings of the mind and senses restrained”; he should hold his body and neck unmoved, and “looking at the tip of his own nose,” think of—nothing at all!<sup>2</sup> In his meditation he is to ‘place the life-breath in the head,’ and continually repeat the single syllable ‘Om.’<sup>3</sup> “By that syllable does the threefold knowledge proceed. When the Adhvaryu priest gives an order, he says Om. When the Hotri priest recites, he says Om. When the Udgâtri priest sings, he says Om—all for the glory of that syllable. The threefold knowledge proceeds by the greatness of that syllable, and by its essence.”<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere it is advised that the devotee direct his eyes on a circle of earth or water or of fire until he can see the circle as well with closed as with open eyes.<sup>5</sup>

This repetition of the soporific syllable Om; the gazing at a circle until it can be seen as well with closed as with open eyes—these are devices well fitted to produce in the mind, not what we should recognize as intellectual keenness, but hypnosis; its outcome is not active and critical judgment, but a state where certain inner objects fascinate the attention. But with the method urged for the production of this ‘knowledge,’ the sacred writings also describe with great explicitness the actual state of mind produced, so we are not left to inference or conjecture in saying what it is.

A striking feature of this desired condition is an oblivion of all external fact. The Buddha in his meditation is unconscious of the beating rain, the lightning, and the crash-

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, V (VIII, 66 f.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VI (VIII, 68 ff.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII (VIII, 79).

<sup>4</sup> *Khândogya-Upanishad*, I, 1, 9, (I, 3).

<sup>5</sup> de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, pp. 602 f.; cf. *Mahâ-Parinibbâna-Sutta*, III, 33 ff. (XI, 51 f.).

ing thunder-bolts—so terrific that they kill two peasants and their oxen close at hand.<sup>1</sup> But not only is he withdrawn from all things outward ; the aim is also to empty the mind gradually of all contents whatsoever—not worthless contents merely, to make room for better thoughts ; but good and bad alike ; until consciousness becomes utterly and absolutely blank. The “stages of deliverance” described by the ‘Blessed One’ to the faithful disciple Ānanda will make this clear. Because their details are so important psychologically, let me quote them in full, though their length may sorely try some readers’ patience :

“ Now these stages of deliverance, Ānanda, are eight in number. Which are the eight ?

A man possessed with the idea of form sees forms—this is the first stage of deliverance.

Without the subjective idea of form, he sees forms externally—this is the second stage of deliverance.

With the thought ‘ it is well,’ he becomes intent upon what he sees—this is the third stage of deliverance.

By passing quite beyond all idea of form, by putting an end to all idea of resistance, by paying no attention to the idea of distinction, he, thinking ‘ it is all infinite space,’ reaches and remains in the state of mind in which the idea of the infinity of space is the only idea that is present—this is the fourth stage of deliverance.

By passing quite beyond all idea of space being the infinite basis, he, thinking ‘ it is all infinite reason,’ reaches and remains in the state of mind to which the infinity of reason is alone present—this is the fifth stage of deliverance.

By passing quite beyond the mere consciousness of the infinity of reason, he, thinking ‘ nothing at all exists,’ reaches and remains in the state of mind to which nothing at all is specially present—this is the sixth stage of deliverance.

<sup>1</sup> Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, IV, 40 ff. (XI, 78 f.).

By passing quite beyond all idea of nothingness, he reaches and remains in the state of mind to which neither ideas nor the absence of ideas are specially present—this is the seventh stage of deliverance.

By passing quite beyond the state of ‘neither ideas nor the absence of ideas,’ he reaches and remains in the state of mind in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be—this is the eighth stage of deliverance.

Now these, Ânanda, are the eight stages of deliverance.”<sup>1</sup>

Later the ‘Blessed One’ himself passes through stages of ‘meditation’ corresponding to these of ‘deliverance,’ and the utter emptying of the mind is again described at great length, with some slight difference of detail;<sup>2</sup> but I spare the reader.

In these accounts the chief insistence is upon the want of all ideas. At other times not only are *ideas* swept away, but there is an utter sweeping away of all *feeling*—the devotee becomes rid not only of pain, but rid even of a feeling of ease or repose :

“Now the Great King of Glory,” it is related to Ânanda,  
“ascended up into the chamber of the Great Complex ;  
and when he had come there he stood at the door, and  
there he broke out into a cry of intense emotion :

‘Stay here, O thoughts of lust !  
Stay here, O thoughts of ill-will !  
Stay here, O thoughts of hatred !

Thus far only, O thoughts of lust !  
Thus far only, O thoughts of ill-will !  
Thus far only, O thoughts of hatred !’

And when, Ânanda, the Great King of Glory had entered into the chamber of the Great Complex, and had seated himself upon the couch of gold, having put away all passion and all unrighteousness, he entered

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 33-42 (XI, 51 f.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 11 (XI, 114 f.).

into, and remained in, the First *Ghâna*—a state of joy and ease, born of seclusion, full of reflection, full of investigation.

By suppressing reflection and investigation, he entered into, and remained in, the Second *Ghâna*—a state of joy and ease, born of serenity, without reflection, without investigation, a state of elevation of mind, of internal calm.

By absence of longing after joy, he remained indifferent, conscious, self-possessed, experiencing in his body that ease which the noble ones announce, saying, 'The man indifferent and self-possessed is well at ease,' and thus he entered into, and remained in, the Third *Ghâna*.

By putting away ease, by putting away pain, by the previous dying away both of gladness and of sorrow, he entered into, and remained in, the Fourth *Ghâna*—a state of purified self-possession and equanimity, without ease and without pain."<sup>1</sup>

The prominence of 'knowledge,' then, in this Eastern devotion must not deceive us into the thought that here we find worship made purely intellectual. That the Oriental mind, with all its subtlety, finds itself unnourished by reasonableness, according to our Western standards, has been recognized by a Japanese observer who had some opportunity to know both East and West: "To us Orientals, who depend more upon our sight than upon logic for the establishment of Truth," writes Uchimura in his Diary,<sup>2</sup> "the philosophy that I was taught in my New England College is of comparatively little use in clearing up our doubts and spiritual phantasmagorias. I believe nobody made a greater mistake than those Unitarian and other intellectually-minded missionaries, who thought that we Orientals are intellectual peoples, and hence we must be intellectually converted to Christianity. We are poets and

<sup>1</sup> Mahâ-Sudassana Sutta, II, 3-7 (XI, 271 f.).

<sup>2</sup> p. 144.



not scientists, and the labyrinth of syllogism is not the path by which we arrive at the Truth." But as even the West produces at rare times a poet, so the East is not without its appreciation of the coldest intellectual ways. A Japanese who has attained distinction in his native land once told me that in his younger days he found a kind of Bible in Mill's Logic !

And so we seem to have reached the opposite pole to that from which we started. If myth may be called the dawn of religious thought, such mysticism as we have just seen with all its solemn repressions might be the twilight. And between the two is that noontide of intellectualizing reverence, in which the severe labour of logic is carried on unremittingly, men seeking first of all to attain their ideal of holiness by right judgments concerning things divine.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CAUSES OF THE TRUST AND JEALOUSY OF INTELLECT

IN religion both East and West, thought which is involuntary, free, and uncontrolled is usually ranked higher than careful and critical thought, or knowledge gained by observation. In the Zend-Avesta, the heavenly wisdom is contrasted with the wisdom acquired by the ear.<sup>1</sup> And again, the same contrast is expressed as "the understanding that goes on growing and the one that is not acquired through learning."<sup>2</sup> There is perhaps nothing mysterious in this contrast. The senses bring to us the common facts of life, to which the unseen world of spirits stands in a certain opposition; and the appreciation of this unseen world does not, at least to early men, seem to be aided by the cultivation of the powers of observation and of weighing and sifting, which help in practical affairs. Moreover, there is, for some reason not yet clearly understood, less sense of ownership in these freer acts of ours. Even in matters of little moment, the effortless thought is apt to seem, not to be *produced by* us, but to 'occur' to us; it drops into the mind—*Es fällt uns ein*. In more significant affairs, the thought may be 'borne in upon us'; it may seem like a stranger, unattached. The very obscurity of its preparation may make us readier to disclaim it; but doubtless there is something else—some emotional 'scent' by which it is disowned. In this way thoughts that surely are of our own making may seem to be foreign to us—perhaps (where there is the ready belief in spirits close at hand)

<sup>1</sup> Sirôzah I, 2 (XXIII, 4).

<sup>2</sup> Âtas Nyâyis, 10 (XXIII, 359).

as promptings of Satan, or monitions of some guardian angel. Or if their worth and tenor to the person appear to warrant it, these unclaimed ideas may seem to be messages from God himself. In the more cautious and intentional of our thoughts—thoughts behind which goes a conscious urging purpose and a care lest they leave the right path—we feel activity of our own, and are no more inclined to regard them as supernaturally brought than is the farmer the cattle he drives home. The ideas that come and go while we are passive are therefore more readily attributed to a source without. And those who can so hold themselves back while thought flows on of itself, do, in more primitive states of culture, seem the clearer channels of divine communication. For this reason women, whose mental processes have over them a lighter press of inhibition, and are often less burdened with a sense of self-importance and responsibility, were frequent prophetesses of old, as they are frequent ‘mediums’ to-day. The idea of a superior intuition in women, more spoken of than honoured among men, is perhaps a vestige of this earlier attitude. The ancient Germans, differing from the modern, believed that women had “a certain sanctity and prescience”; the men did not “despise their counsels” nor “disregard their answers.”<sup>1</sup> Women, however, have rarely or never been great religious founders and reformers, this being an office which requires too much isolation of feeling, too much defiance of the common will. Indeed, the conviction that ideas which come effortless and without the taint of self are more apt to be significant has something to support it in fact. Most men’s product from their own little inner smithy is as nothing compared with the universe of ideas and sympathies into which they come by inheritance and gift from the great society of others.

The higher value placed upon those ideas which move without trace or guide is interesting, not only for its own sake, but because it helps us to understand the nature of

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus : *Germania*, VIII.

that distrust with which the religious have so often viewed all critical thought and investigation. The studies that are carried on after the scientific manner may at first have about them something orphic, as with those early sages of Greece, who were not merely students of fact, but were poets and prophets as well. But there soon arises from the conflict of ideas and from the feeling of personal effort, a consciousness that the truths of science are discovered by human power and purpose, and such truths seem distinct from that body of wisdom which is felt to be independent of the ear and eye, and is not seen to grow. The distrust of science is thus favoured by all those instincts which favour intuitional thought.

But this distrust—the importance of which will warrant a careful examination—finds strong support, too, in that feeling of self-disdain, and in all those motives which lead some reverent men to turn from whatever savours of this world. For, as has just been said, the method of science so clearly relies on our natural powers of observation and of inference, that it must of necessity suffer when human powers are valued lightly. And when the whole of nature is regarded as lying outside the limits of divine favour or interest or creative power—regarded as brought into existence perhaps by some undivine spirit or demiurge—then the cheapening of the more common objects of scientific study adds to the feeling inspired by the cheapness of human faculty. Science is here singled out in no special way, but simply shares the common fortune of contempt bestowed on man and nature.

And this coolness and opposition to all critical investigation has been strengthened from a slightly different direction. Even if there had been no direct motive for its existence, there would have been an indirect increase of coolness toward natural knowledge, simply by the rush of warmth and interest toward the heavenly sphere. Attention has narrow limits, and if it is held by heaven it cannot so well be directed also to earth. There is here a kind of specializa-



tion that scientific men at times find difficult, though it should for them be easy, to understand. From this attraction heavenward, there is apt to be a deficient interest in history and in the minuter details of the natural world, wherever the mystic absorption is strong. Its interest, even when intellectual, is more in the whole, in the All, the One ; and the interest in the parts then slackens. And when, moreover, all responsibility for mundane preservation and success is thrown entirely on God, one of the common incentives of investigation—the practical importance and applicability of scientific truth—is at once removed.

There is, however, another incentive, not to be disregarded, for the religious check upon free research. The votaries of science at times believe in their wrath that religious opposition to their work can spring only from the consciousness that dogma and, with it, ecclesiastical prestige is in danger. Such a motive has doubtless had some force with men in official place ; but deeper and more permanent grounds exist that are farther from the borders of institutional vanity and dishonour. The feeling of awe, whether it incline toward dread or reverence, makes both mind and body hesitate ; and this for selfish reasons, at first, as well as generous. Early men were zealous to protect spirits and gods from prying eyes, partly because misfortune here came of prying. Such a conviction early and involuntarily springs from the sense of greatness of divinity—from the belief that the approach to a god, save in the prescribed way, or when he intentionally revealed himself, brought dire personal results—blindness, madness, or death. In early times this belief is part of that mysterious system of taboo which comes to invest all greatness. The regalia of chief or king, if touched by unsanctioned hands, may bring instant death ; and the objects used in religious rites may have a like fatality. In general, there is felt to be a hedge about divinity as there is about the king ; the person is in both cases sacred, and may not be approached except by those authorized—by courtiers or priests (the courtiers of the god),

—and then only with proper ceremony. But this with time grows farther away from mere taboo, and nearer to that common respect for persons and privacy, which is part of courtesy and morals. The privacy which at first is guarded in a more physical sense is, with refinement, given a more spiritual form. Not alone by gross touching or gazing, but even by the subtler avenues of thought is it wrong to transgress the bounds fixed by the gods. We must be satisfied with the knowledge granted, which to them seems best. For this intelligible reason, of no discredit in itself to the religious nature, it has often seemed irreverent to push enquiry far into things divine. When Tacitus would make clear the difficulty of exploring the German Ocean and of verifying the rumour that Pillars of Hercules were on its coast, after speaking of the unsuccessful efforts of Drusus, he says: "Thereafter no one made the attempt, and it has seemed more pious and reverent to believe in the acts of the gods than to pry into them." <sup>1</sup> In a like spirit the Turkish Cadi urges the Western traveller to check his desire to learn what is not known: "Listen, O my Son! There is no wisdom equal unto the belief in God! He created the world, and shall we liken ourselves unto him in seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of his creation? Shall we say, behold this star spinneth round that star, and this other star with a tail goeth and cometh in so many years! Let it go! He from whose hand it came will guide and direct it." <sup>2</sup> Scientific curiosity here appears to the pious as sheer *Topfgukerei* in the precincts of the Highest. The endless bustle of Science, with all its peering and noting, seems like that of a reporter getting family secrets from the maid.

For those who wish reverence to be unhindered, there is a further effect of the intellect, which must be counted of importance—an effect which brings us to consider again the interest in causes. Some glow of enthusiasm must

<sup>1</sup> *Germania*, XXXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Layard: *Nineveh and Babylon*, 1853, p. 663; cf. James: *Principles of Psychology*, 1890, II. 640 f.

be at the core of any religion that is above mere magic, or bargaining for tangible goods, and for this reason it seems to many to be true that feeling is the essence of religion, and whatever kills off feeling is an enemy of the faith. Now the Greek temper, so opposed to the Hebraic, is marked by the dominance not only of the sense of beauty but of insatiable curiosity. For intelligence does always in some measure curb the feelings. We cannot say that intellect is always and inevitably the foe of the emotions, but it at least subdues and schools them. Wonder and poetic sentiment may follow in the train of understanding ; but when we understand an object, we have, in more ways than we usually are conscious of, 'mastered' it and made it ours. The magic narrated in the *Kalevala* assumes, as we have seen, that evil can be undone by reciting the causes which produced it—the wound from steel is cured by telling of the manner in which the metal came from the earth and was forged. There is in this a naïve expression of something approaching a mental law, namely, that when mystery is replaced by scientific understanding, often the spell is broken, and the object has lost its power over us. If in reality objects do not become powerless when their causes have been laid bare, they certainly cease for many persons to sway the feelings after the older manner. But since the motive to explain is strong, there may be a wavering between explanation and pious ignorance, as when in the *Rig-Veda* the storm gods, the Maruts, are said to be of unknown birth, and again as born of Rudra,<sup>1</sup> or as sons of *Prisni*.<sup>2</sup> And of that mysterious *Vâta*—the breath of the gods, the germ of the world, whose roar can be heard, but whose form cannot be perceived—there is the unanswered question, "Where was he born, whence did he spring?"<sup>3</sup> and the very absence of an answer seems to increase the awe.

With us, however, this effect of explanation may not be due primarily to the fact that natural causes are assigned

<sup>1</sup> *Vedic Hymns*, V, 3, 3 (XXXII, 371).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 57, 2 f., and V, 58, 5 (XXXII, 340, 343).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 168 (XXXII, 449).

for what before seemed uncaused and mysterious, but rather that physical and mechanical forces are substituted for personal agency and will. The thunder which is the rumbling chariot of some god, and the lightning due to his gleaming arms, suffer a poetic fall when they are regarded as phenomena of electric discharge. Even for those who perhaps believe that the thoughts of Lucretius are nearer the literal truth, yet his poetry, just because of its attempt at scientific mechanism, quickens the pulse of most men in no such way as does the view of nature presented in the Book of Job. The scientific view has to be revised in terms of personal power and aim before it can take deep hold of the affections, as does the modern science deep hidden in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. Some are stirred to the depths by impersonal order and great mechanical strength; but for most of us, life is social, and the feelings are responsive chiefly to personal appeal.

But quite apart from the particular beliefs enforced, whether they deal with will or mechanism, the very exercise of intellect acts as a damper to enthusiasm. As in order to look or listen intently a man stands motionless, so all intellectual action requires a restraint and measure of inner and outer life, a fixity of attention, a controlled order of ideas, a steadiness of the body and its sensations. In this respect the intellect, even though it offer stirring truth, is an agent of sobriety. So that, for all who believe that sincere worship must be strong in its emotion, there would be this further ground for distrusting human reason.

But having recounted some of the circumstances in which religion has cooled the ardour of research, the other side, too, should be noticed—wherein religion has added warmth. For in spite of its stepmotherly behaviour, religion has in some ways been a true parent and patron of studies. In some cases encouragement has been given on the inglorious ground of mere utility. The ecclesiastical schools of the Middle Ages, for example, taught a little mathematics and astronomy, if for no other purpose than that these were



needed to keep accounts and to arrange in proper time the festivals of the church. The great buildings which the church erected gave stimulus, not to painting and decoration only, but to architecture and engineering. And to religion's credit must be placed all that intelligent skill which went into miracle plays and mysteries, as well as into the development of music, especially in the hands of men like Palestrina and Bach. Into these matters, that seem at first apart from knowledge, there went, in the act of composition as well as in the response of the hearers, a strength of fresh ideas and a new strength and meaning in the ideas already at hand. But in addition to all ecclesiastical inducements to alertness, there often comes through religion a reinforcement of the significance and interest of natural things. With some, as has been said, religion makes the world of fact seem dull and unattractive; but with others there is a growing zest in studying nature because nature now appears in a warmer light; as though through its ways man could become more familiar with the divine manner.

And here it will be of advantage to distinguish two kinds of science—the one attentive to actual fact, especially of sense experience, the other aiming at standards by which the right or wrong, rather than the mere existence, of things may be adjudged. Now there can be little question that religion has urged forward those studies that are more concerned with standards of thought and conduct—logic, ethics, and general philosophy. For all their blundering check of reason, the followers of religion have desired, for polemic purposes as well as for inner satisfaction, to bring into a harmonious system the great ideas with which religion deals. If systems of religious thought have in the end become a fetter, this must not conceal the original power which went into their construction, and the real enlargement which in earlier days they were able to give men's minds. We, looking back, feel how cramped we should be, living within them, and think that they always served men thus. It is like language, which in some degree limits and stereo-

types our thoughts, but in so doing, must first warm the mind to expand and fill with its ideas the mould which the words hold out before us. The twofold influence of system—its spur and check—is not peculiar to religion, but appears in scientific theory as well as in the elaboration of party principles in government. Religious bodies have been perhaps no more and no less keen for the reorganization of their dominant ideas than governments have been ; and if religionists have been more sluggish than scientists to think out consistent truth, this is, perhaps, because with science the adequacy of ideas is the only interest involved ; while in religion ideas and their logical harmony are but one constituent of several, and the interest and soundness of the whole must be looked to. In this respect, as being far freer in its movements, science can be constantly showing the way to religion, so far as religion's way runs through intellectual ground.

Looking further at the relation between science and religion, it is clearly seen in history that science in the end has great influence in the religious sphere. Astronomy with its enlargement of the world outward, microscopy with its enlargement of the world inward, have without argument made many an old idea seem petty. In our own day we see the rapidly altered view of inspiration and of the way to interpret holy writ, due simply to an increasing historical light upon the origin of the Bible. The doctrine of evolution has also done much to reorganize our ideas of the spiritual life, making it appear to have in it more of progress and less of stationary perfection with fewer fixed and eternal separations. The change of religious conviction is in such cases less by proof than by a kind of sympathy with neighbouring ideas.

¶ The relation of reverence to intellectual freedom is, therefore, most intricate, with strong incentives to mutual coldness and distrust. Yet the incentives toward mutual confidence are also there, and we may expect that, with the years, a more perfect comity will be habitual between them.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE PLACE OF BELIEF

ALTHOUGH so much has just been said of intellect and its rôle, there still remains untouched in regard to belief an important question upon which men have in the past been far from agreement. Of what significance is belief, and what is its office in religion? A just answer to this will not be easy, nor can it be stated entirely without limitation or proviso. And, first, certain facts should be before us which will perhaps at once somewhat light the way.

In a number of religions there are gods believed in but not worshipped<sup>1</sup>—sometimes the gods worshipped are evil, while the god believed to be creator and supreme has no place nor part in the active cult. Even where religion shows no clear division of this kind, it may at least approach it. The Arabs, before the adoption of the Mohammedan belief in Allah as God alone, believed in Allah as a supreme god with subordinate divinities, of whom many were patrons of particular tribes. But Allah himself was the patron of no tribe; he had no temple nor priesthood of his own; and while his existence was admitted, and certain gifts were made to him to be distributed in charity, his worship was hardly to be found.<sup>2</sup> Here belief and honour of the supreme God were almost separate. In China also the Confucian canon indicates that the greater divinities of Heaven and Earth, while worshipped by the representatives of the State, had belief without worship from the private man, who

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 291, 301 f.    <sup>2</sup> Cf. Palmer : *Introduction to Qur'ân*, pp. xii ff.

turned rather to his more immediate ancestors. The Roman, too, in all likelihood paid more honour to his household gods than to the great divinities of whom Jove was greatest ; while the Athenians, believing in Zeus as supreme, built their chief temple to Athene. Such facts indicate something of the complexity which lies in what we call belief.

The explanation of these inconsistencies is found partly in a certain contraction and expansion of personality to which everyone is subject, whereby now we look out on the world in our isolation, and worship the gods that are important for our private selves ; and again, there is a stronger bond with our fellows, and our thought and worship are controlled by this more public consciousness, going to the gods that belong to all in common. In both cases it is belief, but belief which with shifting circumstances changes its hold upon the mind.

Or, again, there is what might be called a conflict between judgment and feeling, the person being persuaded intellectually of one set of facts or truths, while another side of him clamours to have things viewed in a different way—as a man may know perfectly well, on one side of his mind, that his door is locked, and yet something within him keep urging that it may not be so. Such a conflict between belief and feeling is in reality a kind of divided self, each part having its own unharmonized beliefs. Often in religion the discord in belief comes from the fact that value is from many sources ; and prime creative power, which is so important for the scientific instinct and which makes the creator seem the supreme divinity, may be balanced and more than balanced by the god's failure to sympathize with man. The nearer and 'inferior' gods in some religious systems may really be of superior value for all practical and spiritual concerns—for real communion and intercourse ; and the creator be, in a deep sense, the inferior. Worship in that event goes not to the gods inferior in general, but to those inferior in one particular point—in physical and originative power. It goes to the more significant, to the practically



prior, according to the worshipper's present knowledge and affection.

In this we are close upon a distinction, of great importance, between belief in the existence of the divine object, and belief in its value. The worshipper usually has belief of both kinds; although occasionally we find religion becoming an allegiance to an Ideal which is felt to be unreal, without existence and without the possibility of existence. Here there is not in any strict sense an absence of belief, for there still is belief in the supreme *value* of the object worshipped; but there is wanting a belief in its *existence*. In insisting on belief, officials of religion may sometimes fail to distinguish these different forms of judgment, and may be satisfied with a confession of belief that is merely an assertion that certain things exist, when there is desired in addition to this a conviction of their value. When devils believe and tremble, their belief is largely of existence, without conviction of supreme worth in the object. If it were necessary to choose between the two, the needs of religion would, perhaps, be more fully met by reverence with no persuasion of external reality than by such persuasion that did not adore; just as the social bond seems more vital between old-time friends one of whom is now a mere memory to the other, than between two who believe in each other's existence and are indifferent. At times there comes an undue concentration of interest upon belief implying actual existence. Such belief is of great importance, but of still greater importance is it to judge sincerely that the objects of the faith are of transcendent worth. For these reasons we may say that religion is never without belief of some kind.

Religion, although it cannot well exist without belief, may exist without dogma or creed, meaning by these the teaching and formulation of the belief in reality and value—just as there may be a mutual honouring of men without any definite formularies to express their faith in one another. A number of the great religions, however, have had fixed

and stated ways of expressing their view of truth. The confessions and creeds of Christendom illustrate a frequent desire of the religious, which other faiths have also felt and satisfied. In the Parsee scripture, one of the chief sins is knowingly to teach a false creed;<sup>1</sup> and there recurs the formula: "I confess myself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zarathustra, one who hates the Daêvas and obeys the laws of Ahura,"<sup>2</sup>—a confession of personal attachment and obedience and hate primarily, and of cold fact only by implication. In the Koran the primary articles of the faith are often set forth—brief summaries, not of beliefs alone, but of needful practices as well. The Muslim creed, in the stricter sense, and rid of all statement of practical virtues, is compressed into the single sentence: "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed his servant is his prophet."

The confession may from one side be regarded as a kind of counterpart of the oath of allegiance, which states have often required; and the longer statement of doctrine has its analogue in the 'platform' of a political party. Like these secular formulations, the statement of religious belief common to all the faithful is an aid to mutual recognition and support. Religion at its best has a programme of social and personal progress, and needs co-operation, as does any other work. And if the body is to have strength, some organization and some test of admission to its privileges and its duties are felt as a natural need and justifiable. Looked at in this way the creed may be a means of sifting out those less in sympathy with the cause—a means far from ideal, and clearly open to criticism—like property, as a test of fitness for the ballot. But on the whole, it is difficult to test what most religionists would in their better moments count central to true reverence. At the centre of religion, belief, as a mere admission of existent fact, is no

<sup>1</sup> Vendîdâd, XV, 1, 2 (IV, 172).

<sup>2</sup> In the introductory formulas to all the Yasts of the Avesta (XXIII, 22, and recurring often).

more and no less prominent than love : there is here a glowing fusion of ideas, or facts perceived, and devotion to them. And it would be possible to express this unexpressed side if men wished. Devotion is quite as capable of verbal utterance as is our thought, and is perhaps no more liable to simulation or self-deception. The official Christian creeds, in which there is confession of fact believed, and far less expression of devotion to them, reveal to what extent the Church's councils have been dominated by the intellectual and scientific prejudice in favour of the truth relating to existence, as against the truth which relates to worth or value. And yet the bond of union among men, which the creed seems intended to supply, is not so much a matter of similarity of ideas pure and simple, as it is of common devotion to a like ideal.

In addition to the uses of formulæ as tests and signs of allegiance and as a means of welding minds, there is found in them a precise instrument of education. The development of proper and exact ideas, if not the whole of education, is at least an important part, and religious bodies have usually attended to this. The young, the proselytes, even the regular communicants, have in profession and confession the means of raising and sustaining their ideas in sanctioned form. Other means also are found—the more detailed truth set forth in scriptures (which every great religion has) and in the commentaries and expositions of these ; and in more familiar writing or by direct address before the congregation, performing for the church what books and teachers do for secular schools. The homily or sermon, the oral exhortation, is prominent with Jew, Mohammedan, and Christian. The great festival gatherings of these and other religions also have their means of impressing truth by great symbols, by chant or recitation of priest or people, setting forth doctrine at times abstractly, but often in picture and in story and in the form of drama.

In regard to this religious handling of ideas, some distinction ought to be made between the duty of the body

to transmit the truth already received, and its duty to receive fresh truth. The transmissive function has been the one which the organized body has often taken most seriously—just as universities so easily run to teaching, without discovery. The creed and other formulations of doctrine belong to this transmissive side—where truth is made definite and portable.

The religious body usually makes little provision for the growth of the truth in its possession, encouraging revolution or secession, rather than change by the peaceful amendment of its articles. By its stiff-neckedness toward new ideas, the organization often awakens a feeling which leads many to hold aloof for freedom's sake. The mystics with their sense of the freshness of truth—that it is not merely of history or of ancient heritage, but is new-born to-day and again to-morrow—have been the great representatives of religious individualism, weak in organization. The distinction between priest and prophet in Hebrew religion shows the double relation in which men stand to truth—what has already been received must be handed down unlesened, but the treasury is never so full that it need be no further enriched. Yet this relation is perceived in different ways at different times. At the time of founding, there is a wonderful sensitiveness to new truth ; and then come long periods of relative fixity. This is due in part to the need of assimilating the nutriment generously given. In part it is due to the impressiveness of the founder and to the sense of authority which he inspires, and sometimes also to his own conviction that his message is final and sufficient. Thus Mohammed, while recognizing the value of the truth revealed before his day, had no imagination for truth later to come : there was to be no prophet after him. In the account we have of Jesus there is the distinct warning that what he gives is incomplete. After his departure a Spirit would come and remain with men, leading them into a more perfect truth than that which he had revealed. A doctrine like this may seem to the timid



dangerous ; but it is far less so than the belief that men's sight of truth is ever complete.

Our course should now take a somewhat new direction. In the chapters just brought to a close an attempt has been made to indicate the place which thought holds in religion : to show the dawning form of religious beliefs ; the changing value placed, at different times and by different peoples, upon effortless intuitive ideas, and upon thought intently urged and guided by the thinker ; the peculiar nature of 'thought' with many Oriental devotees ; the hindrance and help which science and religion have been to each other, and the causes of their frequent mutual coolness. Leaving this variety and sweep of questions, the way will now keep more within one particular region of thought—the representation of the Divine. And as every representation or picture is of interest in at least two different ways—in its technique, its line, the method and medium which the artist uses, and, again, in the subject-matter, the objects and ideas expressed—so here. The portrayal of the divine world has its own intellectual means and medium, which will first be described—the variable power and faculty of religious representation. And only then will the meaning of the representation be considered, and the great influences which lead men to their peculiar conception of the divine character.

## CHAPTER XVI

### IMAGES OF THE DIVINE

THE mind pursues now one path to reach its purpose and again comes to its goal by an entirely different course. In religion this variety of resource is well seen in the changing modes by which man brings before himself the beings he reveres. The life of these higher powers is presented to the mind by sensible objects which are felt to be the very powers themselves, or else faithful pictures of them ; or the divinity is set forth in images that make no claim to literal portraiture but serve as mere suggestions and emblems of the truth. Or perhaps, at length, in an impatience of all forms of sense, there is given to the gods a character quite unknown in the world of outward things, a character which cannot be depicted even before the inner eye of the imagination.

No consciousness typically human is either wholly without the images given by the senses or is entirely engrossed in these images. Life always involves sensuous material, and material not of sense. And this which is true of the conscious life generally, is especially true of religion. Yet in the representation of the gods men differ greatly in the prominence which they give to the senses. Uncivilized men, and indeed many men on the higher grades of culture, see a sacred energy resident in physical objects. Or if they feel that the divine powers cannot usually be seen and touched, yet these divinities are of a nature to be imagined, and upon rare occasions revealed even to the eye and ear. The endless variety of sacred stones and trees and places, of images

wrought in stone or wood or bronze or gold, the divine animals and men, which are found in the religion of savage tribes and of peoples long emerged from savagery—the idols of the Aztecs, the trees and mountains and springs worshipped in ancient times in Europe, the sacred animals of the Egyptians, the rulers worshipped even in their lifetime, in Peru, in Egypt, and at Rome—these illustrate the feeling that objects directly perceptible are adequate to be or to represent divinity.

But along with the physical embodiment of the divine, there usually is an imaginative rendering. The great world of myth—as of that Benefactor whose return to bless his people was awaited in old Mexico; the enchantments of the Finnish hero, Wainamoinen; the adventures of the Wanderer Wodan; the descent of the goddess Istar to the world of death, there to seek her lost love Tammuz—such tales show the readiness in man to picture and recount the life of the gods as they would the life of men. But better known to most of us is the religious imagery of Greece. There men, with art in their very blood, saw the spiritual world, like the physical world, possessed of surface, colour, movement. The forms of the gods could be shown in the marbles of the temple; their deeds could be told by poet-minstrels, or appear as dramas on the stage. The Greek attained the perfection of idolatry; without scruple, and glorying in them, he worshipped his gods in images that have been an unfailing delight to men.

The Hebrew, on the other hand, though long given to idolatry, seems early to have had misgivings. And yet this mistrust seems not to have checked the impulse even in the great leaders and prophets to describe God himself as he appeared to the inner eye. The Lord has the form of a man,<sup>1</sup> and appears in this form, and talks with Abraham;<sup>2</sup> he sits upon an exalted throne, and his train fills the temple.<sup>3</sup> In the accounts in Ezekiel and Daniel—where there appears perhaps more clearly the influence of the farther East—the

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, I, 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah, VI, 1.

descriptions become richer and more detailed. Yet even here the surroundings of divinity are seen, rather than divinity itself, and the burning centre of the vision is involuntarily left vague and awful: "Upon the likeness of the throne of sapphire stone was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about."<sup>1</sup> Of the "Ancient of Days," it is said, "his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."<sup>2</sup> In contrast with this reverent portraiture, there was in other portions of the Hebrew scripture a marked restraint, as if from a sense that God must not be seen. "And Moses went up unto God," in the wilderness of Sinai, "and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain. . . . The Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud."<sup>3</sup> The narrative suggests that the great leader did not actually see the Lord, but merely heard his voice. And with most of the prophets, it is simply the 'word of the Lord' that comes unto them, and there is no vision, no form nor outward show, by which the Lord might be known. The message itself completely fills the prophet's mind, and he does not care to dwell upon the appearance of its source. Hebraic as well as Christian is the feeling of the man described by Paul who "was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for a man to utter"<sup>4</sup>; and of the Monk of Evesham, who beheld on a 'trone of joy' in Paradise "owre blessyd lord and sauyr ihesus criste yn lykenes of man." But the Monk was not "blessyd of the syghte of the euerlastyng godhed where al only the holy

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel, I, 26 f., w. omiss.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus, XIX, 3, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel, VII, 9 f.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinth., XII, 4.



angels and the sowlys of ryghtwes men that byn of angels perfeccion seyn the ynuisibly and inmortalle kynge of all worldys face to face. the whyche hathe only immortalite, and dwellyth yn lyghte. that ys inaccessible. for no man may cumme to hyt, the whyche no mortalle man seithe nethyr may see."<sup>1</sup>

Quite as striking a contrast as that between the Greek and the Hebrew in regard to the religious imagination is found in the religious thought in the Vedic Hymns and in certain of the great scriptures that to us seem not so distant from them. In the Vedas the gods can be seen rushing through the sky or hurrying over plain and mountain; and if the mind is left confused, it is not for want of imagery, but for lavish wealth. Agni, the god, is like an elephant's tooth, he is like an axe. He is thousand-eyed; he has the appearance of a snake, he is a devouring bull.

And elsewhere Vishnu reveals his supreme divine form, which no mere eye can ever see. "O god!" cries he to whom this vision at last is granted, "I see within your body the gods, as also all the groups of various beings; and the lord Brahman seated on his lotus seat, and all the sages and celestial snakes. I see you, who are of countless forms, possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes on all sides. And, O Lord of the universe! O you of all forms! I do not see your end or middle or beginning. I see you bearing a coronet and a mace and a discus—a mass of glory, brilliant on all sides, difficult to look at, having on all sides the effulgence of a blazing fire or sun, and indefinable. . . . Seeing you, O Vishnu! touching the skies, radiant, possessed of many hues, with a gaping mouth, and with large blazing eyes, I am much alarmed in my inmost self, and feel no courage, no tranquillity." And then comes a picture of heroes entering like a river the jaws of this devouring god—told with a vividness of gory detail that requires the nerves of a literary realist for its enjoyment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Revelation to the Monk of Evesham*, ed. Arber, 1895, pp. 108 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavadgītā*, XI (VIII, 92 ff.).

And yet all the while there is evident the double temptation, both to see the god in all his visible and definite grandeur, and at the same time to declare his glory as surpassing all description, as indefinable. Elsewhere in this scripture the hesitant temper is in the ascendant, and we are told of that "ancient seer, the ruler, more minute than the minutest atom, the supporter of all, who is of an unthinkable form, whose brilliance is like that of the sun, and who is beyond all darkness."<sup>1</sup>

The neighbouring Persians felt freer to describe what they hated than what they most adored. The wild Fiend of the Corpse "flies away to the regions of the north, in the shape of a raging fly, with knees and tail sticking out, all stained with stains."<sup>2</sup> But I recall no definite picture in the Avesta, of the divine one, Ahura Mazda himself. Even the imagination here seems quite in keeping with that hesitation of theirs in bringing the divinity too close to physical things. "It is not their custom to set up images of the gods," we are told by the old historian, "nor to dedicate temples and altars made with hands; indeed, they regard it as foolishness in those who do. And this, it seems to me, is because they do not attribute to the gods, as do the Greeks, a nature essentially human."<sup>3</sup>

In the Chinese scripture called the *Lî Kî* the great gods of the State are vague, silent, impassive guardians of the order of earth and heaven. Even the nearer ancestral spirits seem scarcely to emerge distinct from the memorial tablets which represent them in the family shrine. And at the sacred feasts, as if to testify to the failure of the imagination, the dead must be impersonated: some living one—a grandchild, or (in the case of a ruler) a minister or great officer—was chosen, to whom for the time were paid the honours due the dead.<sup>4</sup>

This contrast which appears in the mental temper of

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, VIII (VIII, 78).

<sup>2</sup> Zend-Avesta, Vendidad, VIII, 71 (IV, 110).

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, I, 131.

<sup>4</sup> *Lî Kî*, I, 4, 4 (XXVII, 87), V, 2, 20 (XXVII, 337), V, 2, 25 f. (XXVII, 341), and elsewhere.

people of different religions is found also within the borders of one religion. The ancient Egyptians, with all their readiness to give definite form to the gods, in stone and on papyrus, as well as in words—as when the god of the savage face is pictured, from whose mouths cometh forth fire to devour souls<sup>1</sup>—yet also describe divinity as with rich sounds that leave no outline: “I am the child who marcheth along the road of Yesterday. I am To-day for untold nations and peoples. I am he who protecteth you for millions of years. I am he who cannot be known.”<sup>2</sup> And again, the serious imagery of Protestant Christianity is far less rich and vivid than that of the Roman Church. The Catholic Church, the patron of art and the imagination, has found little toleration for its images either physical or mental among the colder minds of the north, which from early times seem to have had distrust of too definite representation of the gods. For even the ancient Germans, so Tacitus relates, believed that “because of the greatness of heavenly beings, the gods are not to be confined within walls nor to be likened in appearance to the face of man. They consecrate woods and groves; and by the name of divinities, they call upon that mysterious something which they behold only by the eye of reverence.”<sup>3</sup> And to illustrate the same difference of temperament among writers of the New Testament, how opposed are the ways in which Paul and the author of the Book of Revelation express their religious thought. Both are visionists, both can make an impression on the very eye. But the one rushes through pictures to argument, eager that men should by reason be persuaded of the triumph of the cross. The other, equally absorbed in the final victory of the faith, sees it as a universal drama, with stately dialogue and scenes, and takes the mind captive as by a pageant.

If one were now to pass from the clear fact of such a contrast toward the causes of the contrast, he would soon

<sup>1</sup> Book of the Dead, CLXIII, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, tr. Budge, XLII, 18 ff., w. omiss. The translator queries the first ‘I am,’ and brackets the second.

<sup>3</sup> *Germania*, IX.

reach the obscurity in which all the deeper facts of consciousness are veiled. But this much at least is clear, that the mind, if left to its young and robust self, lives in a world that can be seen and heard and felt, and though never quite content with what the senses directly give, yet builds its larger habitation after the pattern of what is seen. The religious use of sense and of sense-like imagery is but an instance of proper spiritual husbandry ; religion takes those powers that are at hand, and employs them in its larger plan.

This freedom of the imagination, so characteristic of childhood and of youth, may continue into later years. But with maturity the fabric of the imagination often ceases to interest, and falls into decay. There is no single cause for this decline in the plastic definiteness of the unseen. But in a large measure it is part of the price we pay for other powers. In our dreams, fancy awakes as intellect and conscience slumber, and sleeps as these awaken ; so in the life at large, the imagination loses its freedom as the other great powers of mind advance. At long intervals the earth is visited by some genius, like Milton, whose free imagination lives on by the side of some great practical interest ; or a people appears, like the Greeks, who are artists and intellectualists in one. But the custom of nature with common mortals is to withhold one thing as she gives another.

And so religion as it grows to be a zeal for good works to one's fellow-men, or for emotional submission and awe before the gods, or for an intellectual grasp of the divine and a rational justification of God's ways to men—as it develops thus, there appears a reticence, a hemming-in, of the pictorial representation of the central objects of worship. In some cases this check upon imagination is from an unconscious draining of energy by other things. The vigour of the Chinese ran to the practical fulfilment of family and social obligations, to ritual and beneficent works. The Jewish prophets were filled with the sublimity of the



Divine, and with the instant need of compelling the people to heed Jehovah's commands. Even Mohammed, visionary as he was, and of a people whose tales of fancy have been the delight of many lands, follows in the Koran the spirit of the Hebrew prophets. Either his imagination, when it came to the central features of the Divine, was awe-struck and powerless, or else the insistence of the practical import of the word crowded all else from his communication. The message itself and all the purpose and creative power of God is given in deepest poetry. "He it is who made the night for a garment; and sleep for repose, and made the day for men to rise up again. And He it is who sent the winds with glad tidings before His mercy."<sup>1</sup> Yet no mortal sees him, nor is it given even to the Prophet to hear directly from the Lord the words of the Koran. God conceals himself,<sup>2</sup> and inspires Mohammed by his angel. But because nothing could exceed the tropic richness in which, in all other respects, the revelation is told by the Hebrew seer and by the Arab, we cannot say that the effect of religion is inevitably to hinder the creative imagination. For in many ways religion is one of its most powerful stimulants, one of the great influences to develop art. What we love we seek to beautify. But with certain peoples, as with a type of individuals, reverence hinders the free representation of what is worshipped. A definite portrayal seems almost too familiar, almost too close an approach, and is repugnant to the sense of mystery and awe.

But among many of our Western peoples, and especially with the great leaders of religious thought in Europe, there has been still another force to curb the religious fancy—the conviction that sensuous imagery is unable to portray the spirit. The core of character, even of human character, is felt more and more to lie in its judgments, preferences, decisions, purposes, which constantly are experienced, but never can be seen or heard or handled; and therefore cannot

<sup>1</sup> Koran, XXV (IX, 87).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XLII (IX, 210), and elsewhere.

be imagined, since imagination merely retains and recombines what sense has furnished. And when men, in their effort to glorify the gods, begin to dwell upon these inner features of the divine character, the elaborate imagery of the older days is felt to be of no avail. A new realm has been opened to the mind, a realm to be entered not by outer perception, but by inner experience. The contact with the Highest is now made by appreciating what is highest in our own inner life of effort, of sympathy, and of thought. Of these inner realities, the outward form and movement of things with all their changing hues are no revelation ; and he who seeks to behold the glory of the Lord must turn from them. " I have gone astray like a Sheep that was lost," says St. Augustine, " seeking thee with great anxiety without, when yet thou art within, and dwellest in my Soul, if it desire thy presence. I wandered about the Villages and Streets of the City of this world, enquiring for thee everywhere, and found thee not ; because I expected to meet that abroad, which all the while I had at home. I sent my messengers into all quarters, and charged my bodily senses to make strict search, and bring back a true report, but all to no purpose. . . . My eyes declare, if God have no colour, he came not in at those doors ; My Ears, if he made no noise, he did not pass this way ; My Nose, if he did not affect the smell, he entered not by me : My Palate, if he have no taste, he could not enter here : my Touch, if he be not a bodily substance, I can give no account of him. These qualities, then, do not belong to thee, my God, because I am not conscious of any such impressions upon thy approach. For thou hast not the form of a Body, nor the whiteness of Light, nor the sparkling of Precious Stones, nor the Harmony of Musick, nor the fragrancy of Flowers, or Ointments, or Spices, nor the delicious taste of Honey, nor the charms of those things that are pleasant to the Touch, nor any other qualities by which our Senses are entertained." And thus, after consulting the creatures abroad, " I came home " at last, descended into myself." Until, finally, there comes the

cry : " Thanks to that light, which discovered itself to Me, and Me to my self. For in finding and in knowing my self, I find and know Thee." <sup>1</sup>

But long before there is any such conscious rejection of imagery as a truthful means of spiritual representation, and before the mind intentionally employs only the materials of its invisible experience, there is a period when religious images exist side by side with thoughts that are at no great peace with their companions. The trials of this double mode of presentation must now be set forth in some detail.

<sup>1</sup> *Meditations of St. Augustine*, made English by Geo. Stanhope, 1704, pp. 224-7.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE OPPOSITION OF PICTURE AND THOUGHT

**E**VEN where religious images are richly present, the thought of the worshipper soon shows a certain independence of them. The natural object which is the embodiment of the god or spirit—the sun, the vault of the sky, the fire, the storm—are at first worshipped in the form in which they actually appear to man; though even at this early stage they are endowed with the feelings and purposes of conscious life, which the eye alone cannot directly observe. Or if the god be the soul of some departed ancestor, he will at first be thought in the form and character which he showed in actual life. But even the memory, and still more the imagination, is a strange transformer. The appearance and the behaviour of the gods of natural objects, while still keeping close to the physical action of the things with which the gods are associated, insensibly exceed the course of these natural objects. Something of what is meant may be illustrated from the Rig-Veda. The Maruts, the storm-gods of the Vedic worship, are in many respects represented in perfect harmony with the physical action of storms. They are glorious youths, rushing through the heavens on golden chariots, shaking the sky and mountains, while the forests bend in fear before them. They are of great bounty—an attribute doubtless suggested by the blessing of rain in a country sadly experienced in drought. The thought, too, that these Maruts are “the singers of the sky” is still in keeping with the wild voices of the storm. Even when they are given the character of *immortality*, this might be



defended ; for though storms are intermittent, and we could, for all the outer facts, imagine each tempest to be a new birth and doomed to perish when the storm subsides, yet storms are seen to pass away vigorous in the distance, and rarely die before our eyes, as the summer, for example, seems to die. But when to the Maruts is ascribed *wisdom* and *righteousness*, the character of the natural object has clearly ceased to control the thought.<sup>1</sup> Likewise Agni, the god of fire, is at first described as though fire itself were present, gnawing, crunching, devastating. He rages through the earth, and forests fall before him. He is the purifier, he drives away disease.<sup>2</sup> So far we remain close to the physical traits of fire. But when Agni is declared to be "a sage possessed of knowledge,"<sup>3</sup> "famous by the power of his mind,"<sup>4</sup> "highly wise,"<sup>5</sup> and "undeceivable,"<sup>6</sup> then, however faithfully the mind may preserve the radiant image, *thought* has brought in attributes that glowing heat itself never shows. We know what we mean by wisdom and infallibility, but they are not to be imaged to the senses, much less are they observed to abide in flame. The idealizing activity of thought has here outstripped the sensuous imagination.

This insufficiency of the image to meet the needs of thought appears at times even as a direct contradiction between the two. Abstract qualities are attributed to the gods, with which the more concrete portrayal of them in the dramatic story does not accord. In the Kalevala, the epic of the Finns, the god Ukko is declared to be *omniscient*.<sup>7</sup> Yet when the sorceress Louhi stole the sun and moon from heaven and hid them in a cavern, Ukko is unable to understand the darkness. After long considering the strange disaster, he begins to seek the sun and moon, shooting in his search the livid lightning.<sup>8</sup> His omniscience is thus an abstract attribute which is contradicted by the form in which

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, V, 57 (XXXII, 340 f.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 65, 9 (XLVI, 54).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 (XLVI, 6).

<sup>7</sup> Rune IX.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 12 (XLVI, 6).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 71, 10 (XLVI, 75).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 31, 10 (XLVI, 23).

<sup>8</sup> Rune XLVII.

he appears to the imagination. And in the Rig-Veda the gods are declared in the abstract to dwell in unbroken peace;<sup>1</sup> yet in the concrete pictures of the narrative, instances are given of their anger and mutual clash.

But the most frequent and astonishing instances of the kind are found in the Iliad and Odyssey, and are so instructive that one may be pardoned for dwelling awhile upon them. They doubtless are part of the abundant evidence that these poems are composite, and are largely due to the different levels of culture and tradition from which the minstrels drew. Such an outcome of modern scholarship may be borne in mind as though it were reaffirmed in every paragraph that follows. And yet one may well enquire at the end whether these particular contradictions may not for the psychologist be significant of much beside.

The first of these incongruities is in regard to the moral office of the gods. The Homeric divinities seem, at a careless glance, to be without concern for morals, either in themselves or men. Life on Olympus has the tone of a small court circle where wealth abounds and pleasure is the chief aim. Trickery and brawling and adultery were common in this divine society. Men do not seem to have expected the gods to be patterns of human conduct. The gods were born to happiness; and happiness, for the Greek, was not closely bound with moral severity. The gods, in turn, made light demands of men. Usually it is not men's conduct toward one another that is of prime moment to heaven, but only the performance of the religious ritual. No search was made into the heart of him who brought sacrifices to the altar. Religion in this way seems to have been entirely separate from morality.

But immoral as the Olympian society appears, this indifference to the quality of conduct is not a pervasive trait. There is clear evidence that the gods were more than mere seekers of pleasure. Zeus was especially interested in

<sup>1</sup> IV, 13, 3 (XLVI, 356).

the welfare of kings, of strangers, and of beggars. "Is he kind to strangers and reverent toward the gods?" a question asked with regard to men, already shows a slight bond between religion and morality. But further than this limited interest on the part of heaven, there is occasional recognition that the gods are the universal guardians of moral, and not simply ritual, action. When the much-buffed Odysseus at last comes to his home, only to find it infested with the suitors of Penelope, the hero disguised as a beggar is insulted and struck by one of the riotous crew. The others indignantly upbraid their comrade: "A doomed man you, if he should be a god come down from heaven. And gods in guise of strangers from afar in every form do roam our cities, marking the sin and righteousness of men."<sup>1</sup> Here is a saying distinctly inconsistent with the loose conduct of the Olympian court. And again, in a passage of deep religious earnestness, when the old warrior Phoenix urges Achilles to soften his hard purpose, setting forth the beauty of repentance after sin, "Nay," he says, "even the very gods can bend, and theirs withal is loftier majesty and honour and might. Their hearts by incense and reverent vows and drink-offering and burnt-offering men turn with prayer, so oft as any transgresseth and doeth sin. Moreover, Prayers of penitence are daughters of great Zeus, halting and wrinkled and of eyes askance, that have their task withal to go in the steps of Sin. For Sin is strong and fleet of foot, wherefore she far outrunneth all prayers, and goeth before them over all the earth making men fall, and Prayers follow behind to heal the harm."<sup>2</sup>

In these passages there is a sense of moral concern. The gods spy into the secular life of men to see whether therein is uprightness or sin. They send a spirit of repentance by which atonement is made for the wrong already done. Here is at least the beginning of the insight which takes so long to become clear, that the gods desire more than

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, XVII, 484 ff., tr. Palmer.

<sup>2</sup> *Iliad*, IX, 497 ff., tr. Lang, Leaf, and Myers.

sacrifice, they require righteousness. Religion and morality are coming into union, in striking contrast with the prevailing dramatic action of the poems, where the gods give little heed to the moral conduct of men, but are chiefly interested in the worldly success of those who have obtained their goodwill.

The other contrasts of which I would speak show even more clearly a contradiction between the abstract description of the nature of the gods and their nature as dramatically presented. To the divinities are ascribed qualities which, according to the concrete portrayal, they do not possess. It would hardly have been surprising if an inconsistency had been found only on the purely ethical plane ; if, for instance, the gods had been called just and righteous, and had then been pictured as doing deeds of injustice, according to our standards. This would have meant, simply, that what appeared to us unjust did not seem so to these earlier minds. If, to be more explicit, opinion had not become set in condemnation of lying, it would not surprise us to hear the gods called ' just,' yet actually given to deceit. But, strangely enough, it is in the moral realm that contradictions are least in evidence. They are frequent in fields where this explanation which so readily occurs is scarcely pertinent.

The first of these further inconsistencies has to do with the happiness of the gods. Achilles, speaking to aged Priam, who has come to beg the body of his slain son, Hector, pityingly says : " This is the lot the gods have spun for miserable men, that they should live in pain, yet themselves are sorrowless." <sup>1</sup> And, similarly, there is frequent mention of the gods as " living at ease " or " free from care," <sup>2</sup> or as the ' happy,' the ' blest,' the ' blissful ' gods.<sup>3</sup>

And yet when we come to examine their lives as pictured in detail, we find them hardly free from care, or ever-blissful. Many of the gods are exiles, imprisoned deep in gloomy

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, XXIV, 525 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 138, and elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 141, and elsewhere.



Tartaros, where there is "no joy in the beams of Hyperion the Sun-god." <sup>1</sup> And even the life of the Olympians had its times of ruffled calm. Ares is wounded, and bellows "loud as nine thousand warriors or ten thousand cry in battle as they join in strife and fray." <sup>2</sup> Afterwards, when he complains to Zeus, "the Cloud-gatherer looked sternly at him and said, 'Nay, thou renegade, sit not by me and whine' " <sup>3</sup>—hard words for a blissful god to bear! And when Aphrodite, also wounded by a mortal, went for comfort to her mother Dione, the consolation offered her is that such sorrows have often come to gods. "Be of good heart, my child," she says, "and endure for all thy pain; for many of us that inhabit the mansions of Olympus have suffered through men, in bringing grievous woes one upon another." And then is told an incident that must have come down from some dark antiquity of myth. "So suffered Ares," Dione says, "when Otos and stalwart Ephialtes, sons of Alœus, bound him in a strong prison-house; yea, in a vessel of bronze lay he bound thirteen months." <sup>4</sup> And then she narrated how Hera had been wounded in the breast, and endured pain unassuageable; and how Hades had been pierced with an arrow and suffered anguish and grief at heart. And even the Olympian Zeus himself is constantly foiled and angered by the lesser gods, and particularly by her who is "his dear wife." The gods thus had the cares and pain of men, and yet they are called the gods that live in bliss, the happy gods.

The next conflict between epithet and dramatic portrait is in regard to the divine knowledge. The gods are expressly said to know all things. When Menelaus, becalmed at the Isle of Pharos, questions the nymph Eidothea, daughter of mighty Proteus, he says: "Tell me—for gods know all—which of the immortals chains me here and bars my progress"; <sup>5</sup> and later, when he finally overcomes Proteus, he again uses the same expression, "for gods know all." <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, VIII, 479 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 381 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 859 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Odyssey*, IV, 379.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 888 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 468.

Glaukos utters a similar thought, praying to Apollo: "Hear, O Prince that art somewhere in the rich land of Lykia, or in Troia, for thou canst listen everywhere to the man that is in need." <sup>1</sup> And when the Muses are invoked, it is recalled to them that they "are goddesses, and are at hand, and know all things." <sup>2</sup>

But when we turn to the pictured presentation, we find the gods having, it is true, a knowledge more than man's, yet far from perfect. After Askalaphos had been slain, it is distinctly said that Ares, his father, was not yet aware that his son had fallen in strong battle. <sup>3</sup> Poseidon does not learn until late that Odysseus had departed on his raft from Calypso's isle; he discovers it by chance as he returns from Ethiopia. <sup>4</sup> The bright-eyed Athene had no direct knowledge of where Pandaros was, whom she desired to meet, but must search for him "if haply she might find him." <sup>5</sup> And like examples could be given of the ignorance even of Zeus himself. Plots are hatched that he knows not of, and in various ways it is evident that he, as well as the other immortals, had but a limited knowledge of what occurred. Yet, in the abstract, they are the gods that know all things.

The final contradiction that I would mention is in regard to the eternity of the gods. They are described as the immortal gods, the gods that 'exist for ever,' the gods 'that never die and never had beginning.' <sup>6</sup> But in contrast with this, the actual narrative, instead of indicating that the gods are existent always, sets forth their birth and parentage, quite in the human way. Hera, when wishing from Aphrodite a charm to take captive the heart of Zeus, deceitfully tells her that she is going "to visit the limits of the bountiful Earth, and Okeanos, father of the gods, and mother Tethys, who reared me well and nourished me in their halls, having taken me from Rhea, when far-seeing Zeus imprisoned

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, XVI, 514 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 484 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 521 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Odyssey*, V, 282 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Iliad*, IV, 88.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 527; cf. II, 400, VI, 53, etc.; *Odyssey*, II, 432.

Kronos beneath the earth and the unvintaged sea.”<sup>1</sup> Zeus and Poseidon and Hades are sons of Kronos and Rhea ; and from Zeus spring Aphrodite, Apollo, Athene, and others. Thus the present race of the gods came into existence in the past, through father and mother ; yet they are the gods that are both immortal and from everlasting.<sup>2</sup>

These are the curious inconsistencies in the religious view of the Homeric epics, resembling the contradictions that appear in their account of purely secular affairs<sup>3</sup>—religious inconsistencies that are not without parallel in other early poetry, and, indeed, as I shall attempt to point out later, are present in idealization generally, whether in the ancient or in the modern world. We might now consider with care why such contradictions appear in these early literary and religious monuments.

With regard to some of these inconsistencies in the Homeric view, it has been asserted that they are there because the mind swings between two opposing moods—a deeply serious and religious mood in which the profound attributes, of eternity, omniscience, and peace, are assigned the gods ; and an irresponsible, myth-producing state of mind in which an irrational, anthropomorphic element comes to the front, and men are willing to gossip and joke even about those things they value most.

Now the mind unquestionably does pass between such poles of feeling, and Homer is grave and gay in turn. But

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, XIV, 200 ff.

<sup>2</sup> It is not likely that such epithets were given with the thought merely that the gods as a class, rather than as individuals, lived for ever, without beginning or end. There would then have been no especial appropriateness in speaking of the gods, more than of men, as the immortals ; for men, too, as a class, live on. Moreover, since the attribute of deathlessness seems evidently to have been thought of as applying to the individual god, it seems improbable that the thought of eternal existence in the past, which in Homer is so closely joined with the thought of divine immortality, should have been used in a wholly different way ; that is, it seems strained to suppose him using the epithets *αἰεγενέτησιν* and *αἰὲν ἔοντες* with thought only of the divine group, while the epithet *ἀθάνατοι* implying endless future existence, was used with thought of the divine individuals.

<sup>3</sup> See Gilbert Murray : *Rise of the Greek Epic*, 1907, pp. 212 ff.

it is impossible to account thus for the peculiar form of his religious contradictions. For by this theory the fact is unexplained that the degrading element is confined to pictures and stories, while the epithets are uniformly and consistently noble. Homer gives utterance to numberless undignified anecdotes about the gods, but never to besmirching epithets. He never calls them the lustful gods, the lying gods, the gods that are stupid and ignorant. If it were a mere matter of mood, there is no reason why such epithets should not have been used as freely as the stories which convey the same meaning. Mere irresponsible humour can bring forth disgraceful abstract statements as well as disgraceful tales.

A far more convincing explanation, I believe, is the thought already referred to, that these inconsistencies arise because the materials were drawn from various sources, and were connected with different times and stages of criticism and culture. And in conjoining the materials, there often was, in spite of evident editing and expurgation, a failure to do this work in all completeness.<sup>1</sup>

And yet, while pieces patched together are apt to be discordant, there were doubtless special causes here at work, to make peculiarly difficult the attainment of full harmony.

If one may mention first an influence that was perhaps the weakest, these inconsistencies may have been dimly seen in some cases, and yet winked at. The dramatic movement of the works would demand something short of perfect blessedness and omniscience. A consistent carrying out of such ideals would have prevented any real action, so far as heaven is concerned ; and the literary interest would have been confined to earth. Even the Puritan Milton would have found it hard to make heaven dramatically interesting had he not seized it at a moment when it was not heaven, but a scene of insurrection. And even with this advantage, hell stands out in better outline, with better shading and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Murray : *Rise of the Greek Epic*, 1907, pp. 116-135.



body. How much more, then, would the un-Puritan Greeks, with their zest for colour and for action, have found that an attempt to construct heaven in accordance with their abstract epithets of bliss and perfect knowledge would result in something motionless and intolerable.

But while it is conceivable that Homer may have had such motives, they hardly were sufficient to explain some of the most flagrant discords. The dramatic action seems hardly to require, for instance, that Zeus should pause in the love scene with his wife and recount at length his more prominent amours. There would have been no lack of movement if, too, the story had been omitted of the old-time family scene, where Zeus, in a fury, suspends his queen from heaven, with anvils hanging from her feet. Such stories have no direct connection with the actual movement of the epic, but doubtless are remnants of the lore of some earlier and less sensitive age. They would, however, have been expurged had they not found some silent support within the mind itself. For each single mind is found upon acquaintance to harbour the strangest inconsistencies. The larger edifice of thought which each constructs is as composite as the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* seems to most critics to be. For each must join as best he can to the traditions from an earlier time those fresh insights from his own and his fellows' advancing life. The spirit of reverence, without which we cannot well live, makes us cling to ideas that have served our fathers, even after our own life no longer needs them. It requires a delicate exercise of judgment and of sentiment to do justice to the past—we owe so much to it—and yet not let it deal with us unjustly. In Homer, as in the *Vedas* and the *Kalevala*, some of the lower conceptions of the gods were doubtless products of an olden time, which piety would not surrender. The higher expressions came from later insight that nevertheless did not entirely annul the earlier ideas.

But that all the considerations yet offered are insufficient is shown, I think, in the fact that they do not explain the

strange orderliness in the contradictions. Within a single composition there is no marked inconsistency between divine epithets ; the gods are not, by turns, called ignorant and knowing or at one moment said to be eternal and at another, sure to pass away. The epithets, or abstract statements, are harmonious ; and the stories, too, are, by themselves, usually consistent. But between the two modes of presenting the divine life—between story and epithet—there is an irrepressible conflict.

These inconsistencies between imagery and conception become more intelligible and significant when we see that they have their parallels in modern religion, and indeed wherever there is an attempt to bring into union thought and life. For in the first place it is probably easier for abstract thought to change and to reach new levels, than for a change to take place in the definite pictures of the imagination. Just as rites are much more stable than the interpretation, or than the doctrine which these rites suggest, and men persist in ancient usages that have either changed their meaning or become quite meaningless—so it seems probable that society can change its ideas, its abstract conceptions, its judgments, much more readily than it can change its concrete expression of these. If this be true, the early purification and ennobling of the abstract statement of religion are due to the fact that thought outruns the imagination, and mark the advance of social feeling to which imagery comes only late and halting. Thought thus better represents the new, while imagery still dwells in the past ; and a conflict between the two is hard to avoid.

Moreover, we find a universal difficulty in deciding with any accuracy just how our abstract conceptions may best be realized either in practical conduct or even in the free material of imagination. Conduct always requires something concrete and definite ; but the concrete and definite has innumerable aspects, and we are absolutely unable to see the bearing of all these different sides upon the idea

which we wish to express. We choose a line of action that in some striking feature harmonizes with our thought ; we overlook the many qualities in the situation that are discordant with it ; and an ' irrational element ' thus slips in. This irrational element in what is sensuous and concrete may vary in its degrees of flagrance, but it is always there. Its universal presence led Plato to declare that this world never clearly images the heavenly ideas ; they become obscured and distorted when they descend to the realm of matter.

If one may take a striking and extreme illustration, we often have in lynching an attempt in good faith to apply the abstract idea of justice to a definite situation. In some respects the action clearly harmonizes with that idea, but in its frenzy the mob catches no glimpse of the many sides of its conduct that are a wide departure and which really strengthen the hold of crime and injustice upon men. Or, to pass to another region, probably few members of the Roman Church would hesitate to proclaim themselves monotheists, and yet the honours to the saints and especially to the Virgin are undoubtedly something of a compromise with a primitive polytheistic bent. The religious view in its details here does not quite accord with what we might call the conceptional side of the worship. In a similar and still more impressive way, the Church universally speaks of God as the Heavenly Father, the God of love, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. These are our epithets corresponding to the Homeric ' joyous,' ' omniscient,' ' eternal.' But when Christians wished to represent in concrete form the historic life of God, a widely adopted account of the motives which led to the Redemption revealed God as having been, ever since the transgression in the Garden, in a state of anger rather than of love, turning away from men and not to be appeased until some substitute should be found on whom the wrath might fall, innocent though that substitute might be. No story in Homer could more flatly contradict the Church's higher abstract conception of what a divine character truly is. And yet we cannot

believe that the irrational element here was either originated or listened to in any playful anecdotal mood. We know too well how deeply serious, indeed, so far as mood is concerned, how truly religious men were, in the presence of such portrayal. Even therein they found something that ministered to their sense of the greatness and of the nearness of the Divinity, namely his eternal justice ; they felt his infinite interest in the righteousness of men, since even a single transgression could produce in him such lasting wrath. His very anger thus testified to the bond between him and men ; indifference would have been a sign that the gulf was indeed impassable. Later we are impressed by the incongruity between such a representation and our sense of divine perfection, and then it seems wellnigh impossible that men could ever have received the doctrine in a religious spirit. This is because we have lost sight of its many sides that are harmonious with even the highest ideal, and which give it value to one who is at once reverent and uncritical.

We must recognize, then, that religion has at least two distinct media in which to represent the character of the divine. The ideal may be definitely, though abstractly, represented in *thought*, or it may be expressed in the form of the *imagination*. And it is clear that in the same group of minds, and even in the single mind, the two modes of expression may stand in unconscious conflict. It is exceedingly difficult—at any given stage of culture we may truly say it is impossible—to see all that our highest ideals imply in terms of concrete conduct. Or to look in the opposite direction, a living situation such as the imagination strives to construct has innumerable aspects, and we never see them all nor detect at any moment their endlessly varied relations to the Ideal. And, therefore, we are ever clinging to images, as we are always sanctioning modes of conduct, which are in part harmonious with our highest insight, but which, in more respects than we ever at the instant see, are discordant, and defame the truth which we would have them illustrate.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ESCAPE FROM IMAGERY

THE pictures we make of the divine life are unequal to our purpose, if this be high; they cannot express the fullness of the religious ideal.

A certain relief from this embarrassment is obtained in several ways: by sensuous symbols; by expressing the ideal in materials drawn, not from the outer senses, but from our inner experience; and by presenting the truth in the form of relations grasped by the intellect and by desire. We may consider by itself each of these modes of relief.

Even when the sensuous forms are confessed to be insufficient, the religious mind still feels their help. In certain forms of mysticism we find an exuberance of images, but these are not intended to be taken literally, as perhaps is sometimes the case with myths. Jacob Boehme—after pointing out that the Father's power and wisdom are visible in the heavens, and yet that his power is not like that of the physical sun which does both good and ill—continues his account of God as the Son by saying: "Now would one see God the Son, again must he look to natural things, otherwise I cannot write of Him. The spirit, indeed, beholds Him, but no one can speak or write it, for the Divine Being consists of a power which cannot be told by writing or speech. Therefore must we use images, would we speak of God; for our lives in this world are of patchwork, and we are of patchwork created." And the image that he finally

chooses is this, that the Son is not beside the Father, like a second person, but is the Father's *Heart*.<sup>1</sup>

Swedenborg, too, describes heaven in definite spatial terms—as definite as those used in the Book of Revelation. “The quarters in the heavens which constitute the celestial kingdom of the Lord, differ from the quarters in the heavens which constitute His spiritual kingdom, because the Lord appears to the angels who are in His celestial kingdom as a sun, but to the angels who are in His spiritual kingdom as a moon; and the east is where the Lord appears.”<sup>2</sup> But all this, we are warned, is a matter of *spiritual* space, and in the spiritual world what appear as differences of locality are, after all, but an external reflection of differences in the quality and inner character of spirits: “spaces in heaven are nothing else than external states corresponding to internal.”<sup>3</sup>

The image is thus no sooner given than it is declared to be not a literal picture, but a symbol. Indeed, with Swedenborg the whole system of the physical world, as well as the events recounted in Scripture, become symbols of spiritual truth. There is a persistent parallel, a ‘correspondence,’ between the sensuous and the heavenly, while, on the other hand, the purely abstract statement of religious truth, without the aid of symbol, is less highly prized. The Epistles of the New Testament are regarded by many who follow this belief as being inferior canonically to the narratives of Jewish history which permit of allegorical interpretation. Doctrine is important, but (the feeling seems to be) it had best be introduced pictorially.

This constant need of imagery, and yet of treating the images as metaphors, shows that the mystic here has a clear perception that the intended doctrine is different from the sensuous form in which it appears. If we were to describe the process more fully, we might be tempted to say that the guiding force was intellect, but dependent all the

<sup>1</sup> *Morgenröte im Aufgang*, ch. III, 8–15; ed. 1780, pp. 15 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Swedenborg: *Heaven and the World of Spirits, and Hell*, § 146; cf. § 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, § 193.

while on sense. Yet this intellectual guidance is so different in many ways from that usually recognized by the rationalist or theologian, that we may in the end refrain from calling it intellectual. For the insight of the mystic often goes by impulse and by flashes ; there is little of cautious advance, little retracing of one's steps. The very prominence of mental pictures, moreover, and often of intense feeling, marks it off from the colourless and unimpassioned work of intellect. The symbolist thus lives in a richer world and enjoys the varied advantages of image, emotion, and thought. The conflict which I have earlier dwelt upon, between imagery and thought, is, in his case, ended in no partisan way by rejecting one and retaining the other, but by retaining both, and requiring each to serve according to its genius. Whether the truth is set forth in parable or in allegory or as a mystic correspondence between nature and the spirit, the intellect is always present with the picture, and by its interpretation provides the hidden meaning of the symbol.

But there is a form of religious representation which makes no essential use of imagery. The mind is never free from what is sensuous, nor can it by any possibility rid itself of the imagination. But there is a mode of representing truth, in which images are unbidden guests. In spite of the importance which it has been customary to attribute to the pictorial form of our ideas, we can now say with reasonable assurance that there are certain states of mind where imagery contributes but little to the outcome—indeed, seems not to bring us nearer the end at all. As a man in sunlight cannot escape his shadow, yet the shadow does not help him walk ; so, with some persons, the movements of the understanding are neither caused nor aided by the shadowy sensuous forms which accompany these higher acts.

And now it is necessary to make clearer the difference between the representation of truth by imagination and by a process that is not of imagination in the least.

In his account of heaven, Swedenborg declares that the sun in heaven is the Lord, and from this sun proceed both light and heat—the divine intelligence being the light of heaven, while its heat is the divine love.<sup>1</sup> An outward and sensuous experience of the sun and of its light and warmth here stands for the spiritual characteristics of intellect and affection. Now these spiritual characteristics are unimaginable; they have neither colour nor sound nor tactile quality nor any other feature (in themselves, as distinct from their outworks and accompaniment) which the senses can report. And so by the imagination they can never be adequately represented. Yet we are at no loss to know their qualities, for we have had experience of thinking and affection, and can recall these experiences as truly as we can represent to ourselves our outward impressions of light and warmth.

We thus possess a kind of imageless imagination which we employ in spiritual portraiture, using freely and with absolute definiteness and security the recollection of our inner moods, our aversion and affection, our acts of judging, of intention, of condemnation and approval. This store of invisible experiences which are not to be confused with our merely organic sensations, and yet are as real to us as these or as the outer things we see and taste and touch, is drawn upon for religious use from very early times. The spirits and gods of savages are not composed merely of those *sensible* qualities which men or animals, trees or stones display. There is a vague psychic endowment given to all these objects of respect. As soon as there is religion and not mere magic, so soon does man seek to influence the *inner* life—the will, the feeling—of his divinity, in order to avert anger or gain favour. If an unfamiliar word might be used to mark this infusion of psychic qualities into the physical form, we might say that *empsychosis* goes hand-in-hand with imagery.<sup>2</sup> And with the higher stages of

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, §§ 131, 133.

<sup>2</sup> The word 'personification' that may seem to make 'empsychosis' uncalled for, implies that the psychic life ascribed is organized into a



religion this instillation of the psychic is consciously relied upon as the chief means of representing spirit. What Ahura Mazda wills and condemns, what his inner states and acts may be, is of more significance to Zoroaster than the outward appearance of the god. And the same is true of the Buddhist, of the Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Christian. God is love, he is merciful, he is long-suffering, he is forgiving—these are attributes of divinity which do not absolutely *require* an outward image, however much we may so shadow them forth. They are qualities drawn from experience of ourselves and our fellow-men. But in deriving such attributes in part from our fellow-men, it must not be supposed that we can draw them by our outward senses alone. I can see the frown of my companion, but not his displeasure; the smile, but not his goodwill.

Thus my construction of the inner life of other men, as well as of the inner life of supernatural beings, is due to a power parallel to the imagination, but different from it. It is like imagination, in that it freely raises before the mind objects that we have never actually experienced, although constructed of materials drawn from our experience. It is different from imagination in the technical meaning of the word, since the materials used for its products are drawn not from the senses, but from our invisible life of sentiment and purpose.

And besides this difference in the materials used for the two kinds of construction—the materials of imagination being external impressions of light and shadow, colour and tone, warmth and chill and the rest of their wide kind; while in empsychosis inner experiences are used, judging, longing, intending, and the like—besides this contrast of the 'stuff' employed, there is a contrast in the manner of union, in the relations in which the materials stand. The objects represented in imagination have spatial char-

acter, a personal, form. There is need of some expression more general than this, to include also the attribution of psychic qualities that are still left vague and almost formless. For this reason I have reluctantly used the term 'empsychosis.'

acter (along with temporal)—extension, shape, and mutual position of parts. The objects represented by empsychosis only are without spatial marks ; the parts here are, however, not disconnected, not formless, but are held together by many bonds, the chief and most pervasive of which is *time*. This contrast in the two methods of portrayal—a contrast both of materials and of form—does not, however, prevent the employment of both together. A religious object, like Zeus or Jehovah, may at once bring a definite spatial picture before the mind's eye, and also have a rich psychic life.

But beyond physical forms and forms of the imagination, and beyond the concrete descriptions of the spirit drawn from our inner life, there is another mode of representing the object revered—a representation by the intellect. The divine reality is now brought to the mind in the form of abstract conceptions. God is declared to be 'good,' or 'unknown,' or 'unchanging.' Here, if there be any picture, any concrete substance and filling added by the mind to the abstract conception, this is clearly a mere auxiliary and accompaniment ; the prime and dominant thing is the conception itself, whose meaning always exceeds any special illustrations of the moment. The tangible 'stuff' of experience, whether outer or inner, now thins out or utterly disappears, and with it all extension, all spatial quality in the medium of representation. If the thinker still affirms some spatial quality, he affirms it by means of spaceless ideas, and not by images. And while time inevitably remains to characterize the mental process itself, there is this loosening of the bond between medium and object, that the temporal features of the thought-process do not of necessity pass over and characterize the object thought of. The conception may run its full course in but a second of time ; the object thought of may, in this fleeting act, be affirmed to exist from everlasting to everlasting.

These abstract conceptions, which are now the medium used to represent the object, are acts of the mind, wherein

it attends to and means various relations, without the actual presence or image of the facts that are related. Were I to ask in a particular situation, "Is this like that?" "Will it contribute to the end in view?" "What is its reason?" "What its cause?" "Of what class of objects is it a member?" the questions themselves are based upon a sense of certain relations—the relations of likeness and contrast, of means and end, of premiss and conclusion, of cause and effect, of genus and species. As in the use of imagery and of inner experience, so also here we employ relations; but it is a different group of relations, a group that is natively far less prominent. A distinction like that between primary and secondary qualities in the region of sense might here avail. We might say that the relations used by imagination and empsychosis are the *primary relations*—those of space and time, that seem to exist in physical things; while conception adopts as its means of presentation certain *secondary relations* that not only seem wholly subordinate to these of space and time, but also, upon reflection, urge us far less to regard them as possessed of a reality independent of the mind.

But the intellect has not simply the power to extract and retain these relations without their sensuous materials, but it can rearrange and combine these relations freely. Just as the imagination, working in the region of sense, gives us objects whose elementary materials are always derived from sense, but whose form and mode of combination may be entirely novel, so the intellect may recombine and extend the relations that are *its* elementary materials and thus bring before the mind new conceptions that have never in actual experience had anything answering to them. When the Finn or the Greek declares God to be 'all-knowing' he combines into an idea that goes beyond experience component ideas that are severally within the borders of experience. Or when St. Augustine says, "Thou art the true God, the only omnipotent, the eternal and incomprehensible, and infinite. Ever-living, and nothing

dies in Thee, for Thou art immortal and inhabitest eternity, Wonderful in the Eyes of the Angels, inexpressible, unsearchable, and of perfection so great as wants a name. Strong and powerful, and greatly to be feared, without beginning and without end, Thyself the beginning and the end of all things. Existing before time was, Governor and Lord of all that thou hast made.”<sup>1</sup> The ideas here are clearly derived from the common exercise of intellectual abstraction, but with combinations that exceed experience —“existing before time was,” “omnipotent,” “infinite.” We know from common life what ‘power’ is, what ‘knowledge’ is; we know what in special cases ‘all’ is; and while the combination “all-powerful” or omnipotent is never experienced, yet it is as definite and clear to thought as ‘centaur’ or ‘mermaid’ is to the imagination. No man knows what the concrete fulfilment of omniscience or omnipotence would be; yet in the abstract, in their mere form and inter-relation, they are entirely definite.

What shall we say of the mental means, the medium, employed, when the worshipper turns against all conceptions whatever, all acts of intellect—when the Alexandrian mystic, for example, places God above all predicates, higher than goodness, higher than any qualities we may name or think? Or when the Hindu worshipper declares that the life divine is without pain or pleasure, without thought and without desire? Then, indeed, we seem to have renounced not only sensuous imagery and the characteristics of our own inner life, but even all definite conceptions of the intellect.

We are here face to face with that mysterious process of idealization, of which more will be said later. But even now we should not overlook the fact that from early times religion involves a vague sense of something more impressive than the objects which experience actually presents. And this is often true, even when—as with those gods in the form of animals or of living men—the physical presence of

<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine : *Meditations*, Engl. by Stanhope, 1704, p. 227.



the divinity seems to leave no opportunity for the religious object to exceed experience, and to involve anything like idealization. Yet even here, powers are ascribed to the being which are not actually perceived. The revered bull or crocodile or king is felt, perhaps, to control the weather or the productiveness of the soil by some vague quality belonging to it alone. Its powers may in general be like those of common men, and yet there is also something apart, more fateful, more to be guarded and regarded. And this, it seems to me, has in it, even though much darkened, the very essence of the Ideal. In spite of all that we have said about drawing upon the material or the abstract relations of sensuous experience, and of our inner life, yet there is here a vague craving, an incoherent assertion, of something that exceeds in power and value anything that experience itself has yet made clear. That the fact which will satisfy this craving has never been directly experienced, does not make less real the craving itself nor the vague definiteness of the anticipated object.

Such vague definiteness—the assertion of realities whose *relations* or whose *effects* are definite, but whose intrinsic character is unknown—is common enough. If, for instance, I ask some one to bring me what he will find on a certain chair in the next room; the object is, by its position, sufficiently defined for him to recognize it. He may or may not imagine the object correctly upon receiving his commission, but if he holds clear the instruction as to where it will be found, the correctness or the error of his imagery is of no consequence for the success of his errand.

Now, instead of definite perceptual relations, like those of space and time, or of the intellect with its interest in reasons, causes, classification, distinctions, there are also what we might call relations that are primarily *emotional*. I may say to a child, "Go into the next room, and you will find"—not something on the chair (a cold space relation), nor something that will explain (a cold intellectual relation), but—"something you will *like*." Here the object is defined for him

purely by reference to its effect upon his feelings. It is a vague definiteness of connection with himself ; it gives no clear description of the object, yet defines it for the child so that he unfailingly pounces upon the new toy or box of sweetmeats there awaiting him.

And, furthermore, there are relations that are primarily volitional. Imagine a child, eager to build a house of blocks : he has progressed to a certain point, but the roof keeps falling in. I say to him, " In the closet is the thing you need " ; and he, after searching, finally brings out a longish stick that serves as roof-tree, and his end is gained. Here the object intrinsically blank for him, is defined solely by reference to his purpose. The intellectual element is here at work, it is true, but now subordinated utterly to Will.

Such trivial instances will perhaps make clearer the religious method, so paradoxical, when the mystic affirms that God is neither one nor many, is not to be called good, nor to be spoken of even as having being ; but that he is higher than any thought that the mind of man can conceive. To many, all this has seemed mere folly and self-contradiction. And philosophers have plumed themselves on pointing out the inconsistency here. Yet such statements are not utterly without meaning. They are, in substance, an admonition that even our highest thoughts miss the intrinsic character of Divinity, and that It is to be defined as the fulfilment, rather, of that to which our emotion and purpose points. Inasmuch as the worshipper declares God to be *higher* than any of our thoughts, there is left, by the word ' higher,' at least an emotional relation by which his place is mentally fixed. He is that Being which better fulfils our sense of value, of sublimity, than anything imagination or reason can prefigure. A nice dissection of the mental substance would show some intellectual fibre even here ; the state is not one where intellect has completely disappeared. For in using such terms as ' fulfilment,' ' completion,' and ' higher ' we are still in the realm of ideas, of conceptions. Yet the very fact that, save for this vague,

most abstract relation, intellect has withdrawn, and feeling and desire now rule, is well worth marking. The medium is now neither the concrete substance of outer sense, nor of inner experience ; nor does the object receive detail from thought or conception. These are abandoned, and the object is merely something we move toward, an object of longing, or of ecstasy. This, however, is not to return to mere empsychosis ; for the reverent mind does not introduce these purposes and feelings *into divinity*, and declare these to be its nature. They merely point toward it ; they promise an experience of perfection, which, however, can never be described. For want of a better word, and to mark the departure here made from ordinary intellectual conception, we might say that this is *requisitive* or *desiderate* portrayal. There is here postulated an utter satisfaction of desire or of purpose, not of intellectual desire—i.e. the desire for *explanation*, causal and logical—but rather of non-intellectual desires, chief among which are the longing for full companionship and for perfect beauty ; and so much of intellect as enters is merely to express its own subordination to these other powers of our being.

Yet we must not think that these various powers always appear quite single and alone. Often, it is true, as intellect comes forward, imagery and dramatic action in the divine character fade into the background or, if prominent, are felt more as a device of symbolism than as literal truth. But different groups of men, even when they rely much on abstract conception, differ greatly in the importance which they attach to the sensuous representation of the divine. With all its reputation for intellectual subtlety, the religious Orient thinks persistently in gorgeous images. The Upanishads, the great Indian classics of religious philosophy, are like a picture-book in comparison with our arid Occidental treatises on such themes. It is mature and deep, but with the maturity and depth of a Plato, rather than of an Aristotle. The West probably presents much clearer examples of intellect in isolation. And in the West, among reli-

gious bodies, Protestantism is more inclined to grasp its religious truth by thought than is Catholicism. And of Protestant churches, doubtless the Scotch Presbyterians, or the New England Congregationalists, show the intellectual tendency in clear and organized strength. The Scotch are at once given to worship and to dialectic. And Protestantism generally was in part an intellectual rebellion against the power of Rome quite as truly as it was a protest against practical abuses in the church.

And now to sum up briefly the gains and losses involved in some of the different modes of representing the character of divinity.

The disadvantages of the physical, the dramatic, and even the purely imaginative presentment—their failure to express such qualities as life without end or beginning, perfect knowledge and unwavering love—have perhaps already been made sufficiently clear. Thought can attain results which the imagination fails to compass. Yet we must admit that sense and imagination are in many respects superior to abstract thought. Whatever is physically before one, brings with it a sense of reality that is too often wanting in objects that make no appeal to hand or eye. Normally, a flood in China is to us far less significant than one among our own people. The earthquake of Lisbon seems almost unreal in comparison with that of Messina or of San Francisco. Undoubtedly up to a certain stage of culture, and, indeed, for much of the life of those even on the highest stage, things gain in value, in influence upon our conduct, as they are sensibly present. To such a degree are we still in the bonds of matter and of sense! So that we should put it to the credit of all physical modes of presenting the divinity—whether these images be adored or only venerated—that they help to make the religious object real, insistent, and impelling, in a way that the imagination and the intellect at best can only occasionally equal but not surpass.

Imagination also—and for convenience sake, let us include under it what I have called ‘*empsychosis*’—has a



special merit. It helps to rid us of the crudity, the stiffness, the want of elevation, which physical presentations so often have. The movement and life which the imagination introduces into its portrayals can, in part, be given also by religious drama and by impersonation. And the ritual of the religious service, in so far as it symbolizes the divine character, does also in a measure add movement and action to the immobility of mere idol or image. But, after all, it is only in the imagined world that such high themes can be brought before us in their greatest beauty and fullness. In such a world the objects are still concrete and definite, and possessed often of an almost bodily presence, but without the subtle confinement and want which is so commonly felt with even the most perfect physical things when used as actual representations of the Ideal.

Abstract thought, in its turn, can in many ways outstrip both our senses and our imagination. We can conceive of Infinities—of pure number, or time, or space—which we cannot at all imagine. We can, by thought, conceive of an extent and perfectness of mental qualities which we cannot now experience. There is consequently a range in the work of intellect which gives it an office that nothing else can hold. And though some are by habit impatient of thought in the field of religion, yet the higher reaches of faith are, in fact, incurably thoughtful. And if there be pallor in objects viewed purely by intellect, their want of warmth and tactile solidity is part of the price paid for the logical truth and harmony which thought at its best attains. There is also in the use of intellect a virtue shared by what I call *desiderate* portrayal—where all definiteness of conception is rejected, except that the object satisfies desire—the virtue of being at once fixed and yet capable of indefinite advance. Such, for example, is the idea of perfect knowledge. What would have seemed to Homer sufficient to satisfy this idea would not satisfy a Kant or a Darwin; and even<sup>x</sup> their feeling as to the nature of its fulfilment would doubtless change could they benefit by the attainments of thirty

centuries to come. Yet the ideal of knowledge is all the while definite, even though all the while changing. This character is also in those demands, left almost intellectually empty, for something that shall satisfy all feeling and effort. In such bold demanding, where all the while there is hesitation to state definitely what will satisfy the demand, provision is made for endless growth as man's own nature becomes widened and refined. Freedom is also attained from a certain tyranny which old ideas, however large, too often exercise over us.

Finally, it must be said for symbolism that it secures the benefit of imaginative vividness and beauty, without suffering the loss which comes of neglecting thought, and also without the great restriction which fixity of thought imposes. Without forgoing the emotional stir which comes of sight and sound, it makes use of intellect ; and, furthermore, by permitting a free interpretation of the symbol, facilitates the removal and purification of ideas which enlarging life requires. Taking all things into account, there would seem to be ample justification for retaining not only imagery along with thought and rich emotions, but of going further and attaching all of these to physical objects, as with the bread and wine of the familiar Christian rite. The great leaders of religion seem to have felt instinctively that all possible means might be employed to impress upon men the character and reality of the spiritual world.

Thus far we have been considering the different mental media in which the objects of worship are represented. We shall now pass from these contrasting processes of portrayal, and attend to the form and character of the beings portrayed—the contrasts in the nature of the Divine.

## CHAPTER XIX

### MANY GODS AND ONE GOD : THE MOTIVES FOR INCREASE

THERE is a stage in religion when men believe in spirits innumerable. Every rock and spring, every tree and mountain, the winds and clouds, the stars and moon and sun, the birds and animals and insects, the endless spaces underground and in the air about and in the upper sky, either are strange beings that can influence man's fortune, or are peopled with strange beings.

Illustrations of this breadth of belief could be drawn from many peoples, including the native races of America. The Hidatsa Indians, we are told,<sup>1</sup> worship, beside certain higher powers, "everything in nature. Not man alone, but the sun, the moon, the stars, all the lower animals, all trees and plants, rivers and lakes, many boulders and other separated rocks, even some hills and buttes which stand alone—in short, everything not made by human hands, which has an independent being, or can be individualized, possesses a spirit, or, more properly, a *shade*." The Eskimos of Hudson Bay seem as ready as these Indians to attribute a spirit to every natural object that attracts the interest. They believe that each person is attended by a mysterious being, malign in character, who must be propitiated. But besides these, every cove, every point of land, or jutting rock, has its local dæmon ; there are spirits of the sea, of the land, of the sky, spirits of the winds and

<sup>1</sup> Mathews : *Ethnog. and Philol. of the Hidatsa Indians*, 1877, p. 48.

the clouds—of everything in nature<sup>1</sup>. In the religion of the Zuñis we find a great company of mysterious beings—the Earth Mother, the Salt Mother, the Corn Father, the Corn Mother, the White Shell Woman, the Red Shell Woman, the Turquoise Man, the Plumed Serpent, gods of War, paternal and ancestral gods, gods of the heavens—the Morning Star, the Evening Star, Orion, the Pleiades, the Pole Star, all the fixed stars—and even then the range and number of these Powers is far from being told.<sup>2</sup> The belief in a countless multitude of spirits, of whom most are malignant and need to be propitiated, seems to a recent observer to be the main substance of the religion of the Koreans; every home is subject to dæmons, and the outer world, here, there, and everywhere, is filled with their presence: “They haunt every umbrageous tree, shady ravine, crystal spring, and mountain crest. On green hill-slopes, in peaceful agricultural valleys, in grassy dells, on wooded uplands, by lake and stream, by road and river, in north, south, east, and west, they abound, making malignant sport out of human destinies. They are on every roof, ceiling, fire-place, *kang*, and beam. They fill the chimney, the shed, the living-room, the kitchen—they are on every shelf and jar. In thousands they waylay the traveller as he leaves his home, beside him, behind him, dancing in front of him, whirring over his head, crying out upon him from earth, air, and water. They are numbered by *thousands of billions*, and it has been well said that their ubiquity is an unholy travesty of the Divine Omnipresence.”<sup>3</sup>

The ghosts of the dead, mingling with the host of spirits of natural objects, swell the countless company until the mind of the rude believer is bewildered, and at times is brought to the verge of insanity, such is the confusion of

<sup>1</sup> Turner: “Ethnog. of Ungava District,” *Eleventh An. Rep. Bureau of Ethnol.*, 1894, pp. 193 f.

<sup>2</sup> Stevenson: “The Zuñi Indians,” *Twenty-third An. Rep. Bureau of Ethnol.*, 1904, pp. 22 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop: *Korea and Her Neighbours*, 1898, II, 227 f.; cf. Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, III, 55 f.



this world in which he dwells. This confusion is not due entirely to the difficulty of keeping the mind clear in such a cloud of witnesses, but in part to the need of heeding all these spirits practically. The man must avoid all those acts that will give offence to them, he must propitiate by proper rites those whom he may unwittingly have offended, or upon whose domain he must infringe in his hunting or fishing, in the gathering of his crops, or in his warfare. There is here an irregular and indiscriminate belief in mysterious powers, manlike and yet different from men. And amongst these there often is no single ruling power. The natives of New Zealand, for example, seem in olden times to have had no knowledge of a Supreme Being, and little sympathy with the thought of one when it was proposed to them : " Speaking to Te Heuheu, the powerful Chief of Taupo, of God, as being the creator of all things," says one who was for many years a resident in New Zealand,<sup>1</sup> " he ridiculed the idea, and said, ' Is there one maker of all things amongst you Europeans ? Is not one a carpenter, another a blacksmith, another a shipbuilder, and another a house-builder ? And so it was in the beginning ; one made this, another that : Tane made trees, Ru mountains, Tanga-roa fish, and so forth. Your religion is of to-day, ours from remote antiquity. Do not think, then, to destroy our ancient faith with your fresh-born religion.' "

But the human mind, if for no other reason than the need of inner peace, seems unable to abide for ever an unordered spiritual company. We find widespread the beginnings of some system and simplification of the world of divine powers. A group of divinities, perhaps even some single divinity, stands out and becomes the controlling power among the gods of that people, and the other gods are conceived as ruled or in some other way subordinated. Examples of such an elevation could be found among those peoples whose beliefs have just been described. The Hidatsa Indians, with their

<sup>1</sup> Taylor : *Te Ika A Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, 1855, p. 13.

worship of everything in nature, believe in an Ancient and Immortal Man who made all things ; believe also in *Mahopa*, " an influence or power above all other things." <sup>1</sup> So, too, the Eskimos of Hudson Bay believe that the innumerable malignant spirits that infest earth and water and sky are all under the control of a great spirit, *Tung ak*.<sup>2</sup> And with the Zuñis, the strange variety of gods connected with war and planting and heavenly bodies have over them the Sun-Father, who always was and always will be ; with whom there is connected a supreme life-giving Power, A'wona-wil'ora, that pervades all space.<sup>3</sup> Above the shamans and totems, above the sacred animals and the mythic thunder-birds of the Siouan faith, there seems to have been a chief mysterious or divine power in the Sun.<sup>4</sup> The Sun likewise stood high, if not highest, among the divinities worshipped in ancient Peru. An early native reporter of the land—himself an Inca—tells us that the Sun was the sole God of the Incas, yet this ' sole God ' had an unworshipped wife and sister, the Moon ; and above them appeared dimly a still higher Being. " Besides adoring the Sun as a visible god . . . the Kings Yncas and their *amautas*, who were philosophers, sought by the light of nature for the true supreme God, our Lord, who created heaven and earth." Him they called Pachacamac ; and this " may be translated ' He who does to the universe what the soul does to the body.' " <sup>5</sup> From a still earlier narrative it seems clear that this Pachacamac had been the chief god of the Indians before the coming of the conquering Incas with their worship of the Sun as supreme. And by a political and intellectual accommodation and compromise, not without parallel else-

<sup>1</sup> Mathews : *Ethnog. and Philol. of the Hidatsa Indians*, 1877, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Turner : " Ethnog. of Ungava District," *Eleventh An. Rep. Bureau of Ethnol.*, 1894, pp. 193 f.

<sup>3</sup> Stevenson : " Zuñi Indians," *Twenty-third An. Rep. Bureau of Ethnol.*, 1904, pp. 22 f.

<sup>4</sup> McGee : " The Siouan Indians," *Fifteenth An. Rep. Bureau of Ethnol.*, 1897, pp. 182 ff.

<sup>5</sup> First Part of the *Royal Commentaries of the Yncas*, by the Ynca Garcilasso de la Vega, tr. Markham, 1869, pp. 101 ff.

where, both great divinities had taken their uncertain place in the new religion.<sup>1</sup> It is but one instance of the many vicissitudes through which the mind often goes in bringing into some harmony and order the world of spiritual life.

An effort to bring order into this higher world can be seen also among the Arabs before the coming of Islam. They peopled with supernatural beings the vast solitudes amidst which they dwelt, and fancied that every rock and cave and tree had its jinn, or presiding genius. But they believed in a ruling spirit, not of places only, but also of bodies of men; each tribe had its patron deity; and over all the tribes—in answer to some vague national feeling—there was the chief god Allah, afterward destined to be God alone.<sup>2</sup>

A further example of dim unbound association, and yet with the beginnings of a rule and order like some great but loose world-empire, is the picture given in Homer. Besides Zeus and the other Olympians, there are Poseidon and Hades and Persephone and all the older but still living race of gods—Okeanos and Mother Tethys, Kronos and Iapetos, now exiled and in gloom. Below and around are all ranks and orders of divinity, through the many lesser gods and the spirits resident in natural objects like the rivers, down to heroes in whom flowed the blood of gods. Nominally the world is ruled by three equal divinities who are brothers—Zeus, to whom belongs the sky and the upper air, Poseidon the ruler of the sea, and Hades Lord of the Underworld.<sup>3</sup> But in reality we find that Poseidon practically acknowledges the supremacy of Zeus, while Hades is at times referred to as *Zeus* of the Underworld. Zeus had overcome the older generation of gods and confined them in misty Tartarus. He had thus suppressed his elders; he had now subordinated and was beginning to absorb his nominal peers,

<sup>1</sup> See *Travels of Pedro de Cieza de Leon*, tr. Markham, 1864, pp. 251 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Palmer: *Introd. to Qur'an*, p. xi f.

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad*, XV, 187 f.

so that all others were beginning to be either his ministers and subjects, or else but manifestations of him under a different name or form. Such a monarchical system of gods is, of course, still a polytheism ; but it is polytheism that has taken an important step toward monotheism.

But often, even when the number of great divinities has been much reduced, there is a check to the unifying trend, before it attains even the monarchical form. The spiritual world is for a long time left in the control of several equal powers, each acting as a curb upon the others. Thus at certain periods there seems to have been some approach to equality among the earlier Babylonian gods, Anu and Bel ; or Anu, Bel, and Ea,<sup>1</sup>—the gods, respectively, of heaven, earth, and the deep. And in Greece the relation, already mentioned, of the three great gods, each with his separate domain, indicates a belief that is still far from monarchy. It is rather that of an easy federation.

The condition of the world described in the Zend-Avesta may serve as a final example of a very reduced number of great supernatural powers, but still with a kind of independent sovereignty in each. In portions of that sacred canon there is pictured two primeval spirits with opposite strivings—a better thing and a worse, as to thought, as to word, and as to deed. Between these two, men must choose aright. And the choice which still is open to men, was at one time open to many spirits and lesser divinities. The demon-gods chose the Worse Mind and rushed to him, while Piety and sovereign Power and the Good Mind and the Righteous Order clave together.<sup>2</sup> All creation issues from these two independent and opposing powers : Ahura Mazda, the Blessed Spirit, creates the sixteen good lands of earth ; and with each, Angra Mainyu, ‘ who is all death,’ creates some special evil—serpents, winter, sinful lusts, unbelief, mosquitoes !<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jastrow : *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1898, pp. 146 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Gâthas, XXX, 2-7 (XXXI, 29 ff.).

<sup>3</sup> Vendidad, I (IV, 4-10).



Let these illustrate religion maintaining variety, contrast, opposition, in the gods. Over against these must be set the few forms of religion where Unity is attained.

The idea that the divine powers are not many but are one has been reached by individual men or small groups in widely distant regions—by philosophers in Greece; by men like Amon-hotep IV in Egypt;<sup>1</sup> perhaps by Confucius;<sup>2</sup> or that old king of Tezcuco, at least in his clearer vision, though not always;<sup>3</sup> or by the modern Zoroastrians.<sup>4</sup> But there seems reason to believe that in no large and social way has monotheism been held except by three religions closely allied in history as well as in character—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. And even here the faith in One God appears only with struggle and with compromise. Jehovah of the Jews was certainly not at first conceived monotheistically. He was a special patron god, besides whom there were many gods, especially those of the foes of Israel. Still farther back was a belief in many spirits or divinities, not even subject to a single ruler—traces of which in the Bible are seen in the use of the plural 'Elohim' (though this later came to mean a single Being), instead of Jehovah, or Yahveh.<sup>5</sup> Islam, too, emerged from an earlier belief in many gods, of whom Allah was merely chief; and in Mohammed's time the images of these gods, to the number of several hundred, were to be seen and worshipped in what was later the temple of the One God, the Kaabah at Mecca.<sup>6</sup> To the spirit of polytheism lasting over into Christianity I have already referred—a reference which might be extended, if one wished, by speaking of the popular understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity,

<sup>1</sup> A remarkable form of monotheism—the many gods being but an expression and creation of one sole god—is presented occasionally in the Book of the Dead. See XV, and the Papyrus of Nesi-Khonsu.

<sup>2</sup> Analects, IV, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft: *Native Races*, 1886, III, 197 f.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson: "A Religion nearly Three Thousand Years Old," *Century Magazine*, Sept., 1906, Vol. L, p. 700.

<sup>5</sup> Robertson Smith: *Religion of the Semites*, 1894, p. 445.

<sup>6</sup> Palmer: *Introd. to Qur'ân*, pp. xii f.

which is at times felt to consist of three distinct yet closely united individuals—a form of tritheism with more or less strong leanings toward the unity of the three.

And along with the compromising and struggling Unity in these religions, one ought to speak of those somewhat confused and temporary successes toward unity in other religions of ancient times—momentary successes attained by some wider company of worshippers, rather than by those more solitary and exceptional rulers or schools of philosophy already mentioned. In the sacred Vedas of India there is the thought of many gods, individual and distinct. Yet there is also a tendency clearly appearing at times to blur and perhaps to erase their individuality. Some hint of this appears even in the account of the Storm Gods, the Maruts, who are said to be entirely alike; none is younger, none older, “like the spokes of a wheel, no one is last.”<sup>1</sup> Agni, the god of Fire, is one in many manifestations: Agni is in the water, in the stone, in plants and forests, in heaven. He is the sun, the lightning, the flame; Agni finally is declared to be the host of the Storm Gods, to be Aditi, to be Indra, and wide-ruling Vishnu, King Varuna whose laws are firm, Mitra the wondrous one, Aryman lord of beings.<sup>2</sup> But again, the whole is unified about some different mental centre. A mysterious divinity Aditi, the Boundless, the Infinite, is praised as the reality of all the gods, and of whatever else exists. “Aditi is the heaven, Aditi the sky, Aditi the mother, the father, the son. All the gods are Aditi, the five clans, the past is Aditi, Aditi is the future.”<sup>3</sup>

And a like unity, caught for an instant, but almost in the very glimpse confused and lost, is found in Homer. The self-same event may, by the same speaker, be attributed to several gods and, in the next breath, to God simply; as if men felt that there was some single or indistinguishable power including all those divinities known by different

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, V, 60, 5 (XXXII, 352); V, 59, 6 (XXXII, 347); V, 58, 5 (XXXII, 343).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 1 (XLVI, 186 f.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 89, 10 (XXXII, 254 f.).

names. Thus Agamemnon, when excusing his anger toward Achilles, says: "It is not I who am the cause, but Zeus and Moira and Erinys that walketh in the darkness. . . . What could I do? It is God who accomplisheth all. Eldest daughter of Zeus is Atè who blindeth all, a power of bane." Then he tells how even Zeus was once blinded by this Atè, and concludes: "But since thus blinded was I, and Zeus bereft me of my wit, fain am I to make amends."<sup>1</sup> The power, of which Agamemnon here speaks under the names of Zeus and Moira (Fate) and Erinys, he sums up in the next sentence in the single word 'God,' and at the next moment it is ascribed to Atè, and finally the god-sent blindness is attributed to Zeus alone. The frequency with which in these poems events are ascribed simply to God—though scholars might differ in regard to the niceties of translation here—perhaps indicates that at times the entire divine power was, for the instant, viewed without distinction into conflicting persons. The epics thus seem to show side by side the two opposite movements of thought which are so characteristic of religion—the movement toward many spiritual powers, and again toward a single God. Later thinkers in Greece held consciously and persistently to the monotheistic view, though polytheism never lost its hold upon the popular imagination. In this respect the development is somewhat like that which appears in the Hebrew scriptures, where pure monotheism was attained by the poets and prophets, while the people clung long and stubbornly to gods other than Jehovah.

Having set forth in this rough and hasty way the contrasts in the number and organization of the gods, we might now attempt to trace some of the motives which lead to such divergence. Why a myriad of divine beings for some; and few, or only one, for others?

The causes which lead men to believe that gods and spirits are many are themselves many. In the first place,

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, XIX, 86 ff.

primitive man sees about him countless objects and occurrences that suggest the presence of animating spirits. The particular fierce wind that now visits him is an angry being, while the gentle and beneficent rain seems the work of a spirit well-disposed. And for the same reason that the wind is independent and due to a separate spirit, so there are many different winds, coming from different directions and having different characters, and suggesting a variety of spirits. And similarly, sun, moon, and stars; springs, rivers, and seas; the rocks and trees and all the innumerable company of beasts and birds; the aches and pains and diseases of himself and of his people—these strike his mind as isolated facts: the interest in each is, like a child's, an isolated interest, and each is made a separate being, an individual, like himself and yet different.

But not alone the forms which outward nature shows; the very creatures of his dreams are taken as realities. It requires much training to rid men of the conviction that the experiences of sleep are not real and of the same significance as those of waking—or indeed of even greater significance.<sup>1</sup> The savage who dreams of visiting a distant land, and of speaking with those who have died, feels that he has actually made the journey and seen the dead. And doubtless those monsters that live on in the belief of men—dragons, harpies, sphinxes, griffins, centaurs, gorgons, hydras, and chimaeras dire—are, in a large measure, but different forms of primitive nightmare accepted as reality.

But as a result of dreaming, and from other causes, there is a further tendency among early men to duplicate and multiply their spirits and gods. The belief in 'doubles' in part arises from the fact that while the body is in one place, it may in dream-life be far away, and still retain an appearance exactly like the person who remains asleep. Shadows, persons' reflections in water or elsewhere—even in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the still present attachment to "dream books"; and, for a feeling quite on another plane, Bigelow: *The Mystery of Sleep*, 1903.



pupil of another's eye—help to strengthen the belief in doubles and little indwelling ghosts.

But the number of such indwelling or accompanying spirits need not be limited to one. Indeed, the belief that each person possesses more than a single soul is not uncommon, and can be defended with a show of reason. A Minnetaree, who believed that each man had four souls—since in this way gradual death could be accounted for, by a successive departure of souls—was heard “quietly discussing this doctrine with an Assineboine, who believed in only one soul to each body.”<sup>1</sup> And a Chippewa, asked to explain why he thought that each human being had two souls, replied: “It is known that, during sleep, while the body is stationary, the soul roams over wide tracts of country, visiting scenes, persons, and places at will. Should there not be a soul, at the same time, to abide with the body, it would be as dead as earth, and could never reappear in future life.”<sup>2</sup> The Calabar negroes believe that every man has four souls—the soul that survives death, the dream-soul, the shadow on the path, and the ‘bush soul,’ which exists in the form of an animal in the forest.<sup>3</sup> So, too, it was an article of faith among the Caribs, that a soul existed in the head, a soul in the heart, and a soul wherever pulsations of an artery were felt. In Borneo and in the Malay Peninsula there is a belief that every man has seven souls. The Alfoors of Poso in Celebes believe that he has three, while the Laos attribute thirty spirits or souls to different regions of the body.<sup>4</sup> After such intemperance of belief in souls, the Egyptian doctrine that each single being had his ‘double’ and two souls besides—his Ka, his Ba, and his Khu<sup>5</sup>—or the Aristotelian tenet of three souls, a vegetative, an animal and a rational soul, seems moderate indeed.

<sup>1</sup> Mathews: *Ethnog. and Philol. of the Hidatsa Indians*, 1877, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft: *Archives of Aborig. Knowl.*, 1860, VI, 665.

<sup>3</sup> Kingsley: *Travels in West Africa*, 1897, p. 459, and cf. p. 517.

<sup>4</sup> Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, III, 418 f.; Skeat: *Malay Magic*, 1900, pp. 50, 411, 454, 578; Roth: “Natives of Borneo,” *Jour. Anthropol. Institute of Gt. Brit. and Ireland*, XXI (1892), p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> Sayce: *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, 1902, pp. 60–64.

Now what is true of man holds true of all things, according to early belief. And consequently existences both higher and lower than man are similarly reduplicated. That even inanimate objects were felt to be 'spiritually' repeated, is shown by a usage in offering food to the dead, with the thought that they partake, not of the physical part of the food, but of its double, invisible to us. Indeed, spiritual sustenance and comfort may be had even from cheap imitations of food or of other things desired. The *Lî Kî* of the Chinese commends the use of such "vessels to the eye of fancy" as being superior to the use of real offerings—partly because spirits are different from living men and therefore should be treated differently, yet partly, perhaps, because the dead apparently are too stupid to know the difference between imitation and reality. Zǎng-tze seems to have been deeply shocked when Duke Hsiang offered to the shade of his deceased wife *real* pickles in *real* vinegar—doubtless a favourite dish of hers while living—instead of the more suitable imitations.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, not only beings below man, but those above him, had their doubles, or replicas. The god Horus of Egypt had his four Khu, or souls; while Ra, the Sun-god, had seven bird-like souls or spirits.<sup>2</sup> And among the Greeks, though perhaps from an entirely different motive, a god might have various contrasting appearances: Dionysos had not only a human form, but also that of a goat and a bull.<sup>3</sup> And whether from the notion of doubles or for some other reason, it was not impossible to have in one place two temples to the same god.<sup>4</sup>

In attempting to name the influences that make for manifoldness of divinity, it must be said, too, that the ritual service and the honour of the gods may increase their number. Thus the sacred utensils and the materials of

<sup>1</sup> *Lî Kî*, II, 1, 3, 3 and 6 and 19 (XXVII, 148, 151, 154).

<sup>2</sup> Sayce: *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, 1902, pp. 61, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, II, 167.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, I, 22; cf. II, 44, where the motives, however, seem to be quite different.

sacrifice may themselves become divine existences, and be conceived as worshipping other gods. The sacred drink of the Parsees, Haoma, is said to offer a sacrifice and prayer, now to Drvâspa and again to the good Ashi, to be able to bind the Turanian murderer Franghrasyan.<sup>1</sup> And the sacrificial post is, in the Vedas, asked to "bestow on us treasures with offspring" and "bliss to our fields."<sup>2</sup>

Nor should we overlook the influence of names upon the number of the gods. The feeling which the untutored mind has for the name of a thing is difficult for some to appreciate. An inkling of the attitude, however, can be gained by noticing the sense of possession and mastery which the child has in learning the name of an object; and by recalling the oppressive alienation which we all feel on meeting an old friend whose name we cannot remember. The name of a thing, especially for the savage, is a kind of soul of the thing itself. Savages thus have secret names for themselves which must not be known abroad. And this is a means of self-protection; for one can gain magical power over another by knowing his name. Moreover—and this brings us nearer our own topic—if the object or person has more than one name, there may result thereby a certain multiplication of individuality. Thus it appears that among the Malays the two names 'Guru' and 'Mahadewa' for the one divine Siva, brought into belief two distinct beings answering to these separate terms.<sup>3</sup> And in ancient Egypt, the sun or Sun-god had the two names Tum and Ra, and from these two names, it has been thought, there developed the two distinct gods Tum and Ra, one of whom seems afterward to have been regarded as the father of the other.<sup>4</sup>

The possible introduction of a god still earlier than either Tum or Ra would exemplify a still further motive which

<sup>1</sup> Zend-Avesta, Gô's Yast, IV (XXIII, 114); Ashi Yast, VI (XXIII, 277 f.).

<sup>2</sup> Vedic Hymns, III, 8, 6 f. (XLVI, 252).

<sup>3</sup> Skeat: *Malay Magic*, 1900, p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> Sayce: *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, 1902, pp. 81 f., 231; *Book of the Dead*, LXXIX, 2 f.; 'Book of Breathings' (Budge, p. 659).

acted to increase the number of the gods—the explanatory impulse, which suggests the need of a cause even for a divinity; and so an older god begins to loom through the primal mist, to be the fount and origin of the deity that is actually worshipped. The gods must be provided with an ancestry, like men's. Here, then, we have not merely a scientific or explanatory impulse at work, but also that of social imitation. The gods must be thought of not only in the character of men, but related, as men are, to parents, wives, and offspring. Thus the need of a parent tended to bring from obscurity an additional god. And similarly the need, not of a parent, however, but of a consort, seems to have been an important factor in calling to life a number of Babylonian and Egyptian goddesses. These goddesses, vague and characterless, seem to have come largely from the impulse to repeat in heaven the relations found on earth. If men of rank usually had wives, how much more the gods! And the ease with which a feminine name could be provided to match the masculine may well have made this process run more smoothly.<sup>1</sup> But social imitation was here, perhaps, the chief motive power.

But if one were to be just to imitation as an active influence in forming the picture of the gods, it would have to be pointed out that human society, as a pattern of the divine, always shows a *multitude* of rulers, rather than a single one. It is often assumed that the earthly pattern is the single tribe or state, where there is organization under a single head. But the actual fact before men (if not at the moment, yet in any longer stretch) is always a conflict of chiefs or kings: wars without, and pretenders and disputants of royal power within. And so mere imitation, unguided by some other motive, would always tend to maintain polytheism and not the universal rule of a single god. And if, instead of political patterns, the mind imitates the variety of sources from which fashioned objects come,

<sup>1</sup> Sayce: *op. cit.*, pp. 231, 332; Maspero: *Dawn of Civilization*, tr. McClure, 1894, pp. 105 f.



creation seems naturally to be the work of many. The old chief whose words have already been given, felt that if human analogy were to count, the separate occupations of men—whereby one is a blacksmith, another a carpenter ; one builds ships, another houses—readily supported the view that the god who made the trees was not the one who made the mountains or the fish.<sup>1</sup>

Further, it seems evident that the contact of people having diverse religious systems tends in early times to a growth of the number of gods in each. Much has been made of the influence of political union as diminishing the number of gods and bringing on the day of monotheism,<sup>2</sup> and more will be said of this later. But we must see, too, that in many cases, while it makes two systems into one, and so tends to simplification, yet it also increases the number of gods in one of the old faiths, since this religion accepts into its belief, and perhaps into its worship, the gods of the people with whom there has been the union. The Peruvian Incas, who worshipped the Sun as the chief deity, seem also, to some extent, to have accepted the belief in a supreme invisible god—Pachacamac, the creator of the world—from the Indians whom they conquered.<sup>3</sup> But often, by war and conquest, the gods of those subjugated became vassals of the gods of the victors ; as when the god of some Egyptian city—for instance, Ammon of Thebes—rises with the fortune of his city and joins to himself as subordinates the gods of cities conquered ; or when, with the Babylonian successes, to Marduk are joined the gods of the cities subject to Babylon.<sup>4</sup> In a somewhat similar way the Greek and Roman pantheons were enlarged to receive many gods of peoples round about, as well

<sup>1</sup> Taylor : *Te Ika A Maui*, 1855, p. 13 ; cf. p. 259 of the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Fiske : *The Idea of God*, 1893, pp. 74 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Travels of Pedro de Cieza de Leon*, tr. Markham, 1864, pp. 251 ff. ; First Part of the *Royal Commentaries of the Yncas*, by the Ynca Garcilasso de la Vega, tr. Markham, 1869, pp. 101 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Jastrow : *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1898, pp. 54, 116 f.

perhaps as of older populations that once possessed the soil on which the conquerors finally were established.

Thus there is a stage of human culture where the number of divinities can increase indefinitely ; where man, like the child, finds no dearth of objects to fascinate and awe him. Fickle in his own interests and without any long-dominating purpose, it is easy for him, thus ill-organized within, to see the world without ill-organized. The spirit world but reflects the variety of his own inner life as well as of the natural world about him. He is himself a war of interests ; nature without is a scene of clashing forces ; the political world is the embodiment of jar and conflict ; what wonder, then, that if to these general motives are added the more specific influences of the abounding forms of dreamland, together with the multitude of duplicates by reason of shadows, reflections, and the effect of words, and much besides—what wonder if the spirit world be inconceivably prolific !

## CHAPTER XX

### THE MOTIVES FOR DECREASE AND UNITY

THE number of the gods is enlarged by many influences. But opposed to these, and working as by a kind of higher Malthusian law, there are forces that decrease this spirit population. And to these forces we must now attend.

In general there is no stronger agent for this reduction than the desire for organization. But in its first intention, an organized body of spirits may be no less in number than an unorganized—just as an army need be no smaller than the mob from which it is drilled. Indeed, the officering in both instances may be additional, and but swell the size. But in the spirit world the secondary effect of organization is, that the mind, having now a ready means of thinking the group together, does in many instances begin to hold to the group, or to the heads of the group, at the expense of the many individuals who compose it.

One of the early means to such a grouping (of which something already has been said) is the projection into the realm of spirits of the organization found in human society, the mental copying of the patterns of connection always at hand in the family and in the tribe and state. The subordination of gods or spirits under a chief god very soon appears, and in a large measure it is a reflection of these human institutions. If man rarely or never sees a human being unless under some captain or ruler, it is but natural that the higher beings should soon show this same organization. Man does not merely personify. He gives social order to the creatures of his personification. And since the

family form or the patriarchal or monarchical form is most familiar, the divine society comes commonly to reflect one of these forms. Thus the arrangement of the gods into diads, of husband and wife, or into triads, of father, mother, and son, is often met with. Among the gods of Babylon, the divinities Samas and Â, that were originally independent and, indeed, both masculine, are united as man and wife, Â becoming feminine in the process, until Samas finally absorbs the attributes of both.<sup>1</sup> In a somewhat similar way Ea and Dam-kina, husband and wife, have joined to them as their son a god Ašari, who earlier appears to have had no such kinship with them.<sup>2</sup> And in Egypt, besides such triads as Osiris, Isis, and Horus—father, mother, and son—there were groups of nine gods, henneads,<sup>3</sup> related by blood, though this blood relation seems to have been of secondary growth, for the gods in many instances existed at first in independence.<sup>4</sup> That triads of gods, however, have an attraction for the mind, which the family relation can with difficulty fully explain, is shown by the frequency of such groups as Anu, Bel, and Ea ; Sin, Samas, and Hadad, and still other triads in Babylon :<sup>5</sup> or Thor, Odhin, and Freyr ; Odhin, Hœnir, and Loki, among the Teutons :<sup>6</sup> or the set phrase, ‘ Zeus, Athene, and Apollo,’ occurring in Homer :<sup>7</sup> or the grouping of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, in India. But often the grouping was less formal and more life-like, as when we have a free rendering of an ancient patriarchal government, Zeus ruling over his younger brethren, his children, and his children’s children—an unruly company, with petty quarrels and larger factional dissensions, but of much cheer withal and inward comfort. It is a picture of the older Greek ideal before democracy and speculation had won the day.

<sup>1</sup> Sayce : *Religs. of Anc. Egypt and Babyl.*, 1902, pp. 318 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 300, 326 f.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero : *Dawn of Civilization*, tr. 1894, pp. 142 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Sayce : *op. cit.*, pp. 83 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313 f., 321 f.

<sup>6</sup> de la Saussaye : *Religion of the Teutons*, tr. Vos, 1902, p. 286.

<sup>7</sup> *Odyssey*, XVIII, 235 ; IV, 341 ; cf. the grouping, Zeus and Moira and Erinys, *Iliad*, XIX, 87.



With these passing illustrations of the influence of social patterns upon the organization and unity of the gods, let us pass to a further influence toward unity which is felt in discerning the likeness among natural objects. It is difficult to say whether primitive man is more adept at overlooking similarities than at perceiving them. Many cases occur, it is true, where objects such as boats, which to us so obviously go in a class, in some savage language have no name common to them all. And doubtless the early multitude of spirits is due to an insistence on the separateness and individuality of things. But very early an identity is seen in differing objects. I have already mentioned the case where the Storm-gods are described as equal, "like spokes of a wheel." Here an easily detected likeness is felt in the differing storms. But the mind goes further when identity is discerned in sun, lightning, plants, water, stone—and these are all felt to be the seat and embodiment of Agni,<sup>1</sup> simply because, perhaps, fire has some connection with each. This connection is clear with sun and lightning; less clear with plants and trees, yet these burn—fire can come from them; least clear with water and stone, but still the sun appears to issue daily from the one and daily to return, while sparks of fire may be struck from the flinty rock. Here a personal identity and unification is effected possibly by perceiving what would be for most of us a rather obscure common feature, the connection with fire.

But frequently the discovered identity seems to us less obscure, though worked out religiously in a surprising way. A French missionary among the American Indians long ago reported it their belief that "all the animals of each species have an elder brother, who is, as it were, the principle and origin of all the individuals, and this elder brother is marvellously great and powerful. The elder brother of the beavers, they told me, is, perhaps, as large as our cabin."<sup>2</sup> And in a later account we are told of a belief, among the

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, II, 1 (XLVI, 186 f.).

<sup>2</sup> Father Le Jeune, quoted by Tylor: *Primitive Culture*, 1903, II, 244.

Iroquois, in a "Spirit of each of the different species of trees, of each of the species of shrubs bearing fruit, and of the different herbs and plants. Thus there was the Spirit of the oak, of the hemlock, and of the maple, of the whortleberry and of the raspberry, and also of the spearmint, and of tobacco."<sup>1</sup> And outside of America, a simple classification is likewise carried into the spirit world. The Finns believed "that every object in Nature must have a protecting deity, a *haltia*, a *genius*—some Being that was its creator, and thenceforth looked after it." And these watchful deities were attached, not to the single object, but to the class: one ruled over the wild-cherry trees, another over the junipers, a third over the mountain ash, and so on.<sup>2</sup> As a final illustration—In Buyán, a mythical island of happiness believed in by the Russian people, "there are to be found 'the Snake older than all snakes, and the prophetic Raven, elder brother of all ravens,' and the Bird, the largest and oldest of all birds, with iron beak and copper claws, and the Mother of Bees, eldest among bees."<sup>3</sup> Such species-deities, whose similarity to the Platonic Ideas has been noticed more than once, may at first have been additional to the spirits of the individual snakes, ravens, bees, oaks, hemlocks, maples. But in due time the inevitable effect, as with Plato, is to take from the sanctity of the visible instances, while their heavenly prototype, one and invisible, alone receives full honour. Here the species-deity is reached by introducing a blood kinship among individuals that show likeness. The elementary logical motive, seen in all classification, is here helped out by the imagination; and the members of the class being thus united by a family bond, the lowly individuals look back to their one proud example.

! But the identification and coalescence which here works among earthly things to call up the heavenly, is active also

<sup>1</sup> Morgan: *League of the Iroquois*, 1851, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Castrén: *Finnische Mythologie*, übertr. v. A. Schiefner, 1853, pp. 105 f., 160.

<sup>3</sup> Ralston: *Songs of the Russian People*, 1872, pp. 374 f.

within the heavenly sphere by itself. Gods that are alike, whether in inherent character or in their office, tend to lose their individuality and to be merged in one. The Greeks and Romans discovered their own gods in the worship of the peoples about them. Herodotus finds Zeus in Bel at Babylon; finds him again, with Dionysus and Ares and other Greek gods, among the divinities of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, in a like spirit, recognized Mercury, Hercules, and Mars among the gods of the Germans.<sup>2</sup> And the same process goes on with even more vitality within religions more closely bound together. Among the Babylonians the god Ásari of the subordinate city of Eridu was identified with Merodach, or Marduk, of the greater city Babylon,<sup>3</sup> while in Egypt the many sun-gods scattered over the land were, with closer political union, all identified with the one Sun-god Ra.<sup>4</sup> It is the same kind of mental process which led some of the early missionaries in America to identify the cross upon the temple of the Wind-god Hurakan—whence our ‘hurricane’—with the Christian emblem, and to encourage the legend that the Apostle Thomas had of old evangelized America.<sup>5</sup>

But apart from any such perception of similarity and direct identification, there is often an unconscious attraction of attributes from the less to the greater god, even while the less remains a somewhat distinct personality. Yet the result in the end is, that the subordinate divinity, thus stripped of his inherent power, becomes more and more a shadow, and at last, as a token of final absorption, yields up even his name to his superior, making the blend complete. Thus in the Babylonian religion the older god Ea transfers his name to his great son Marduk; and Bel, the old god of Nippur, transfers his title ‘lord of the lands’ to the same

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, I, 181 ff., II, 47–50, 63 f., II, 122 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Germania*, IX, and cf. de la Saussaye: *Religion of the Teutons*, tr. Vos, 1902, pp. 103, 286.

<sup>3</sup> Sayce: *Religs. of Anc. Egypt and Babyl.*, 1902, pp. 307, 313.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> Reville: *Religions of Mexico and Peru*, 1884, p. 38.

great god<sup>1</sup>—an act whose solemn importance can be appreciated only when we remember that in the belief of simpler men, as to some extent with everyone, the name is part and parcel of one's personality. The elevation of this Marduk, lord of Babylon, was fully expressed when he received the names—the fifty names—and with them the powers, of the other great divinities.<sup>2</sup>

A different form of this gradual assumption, by the greatest, of the honour and attributes of lesser gods is found in Hindu worship, although traces of it are also in Judaism and Christianity. The god Vishnu takes up into his own personality the lives of a number of subordinate spirits and divinities by the thought that they are but early and imperfect manifestations, are Avatâras, of himself. In nine forms has the great divinity already appeared among men—as a fish that saved Manu's ship in the deluge; as a tortoise that helped the gods to bring treasures from the sea; as a boar; as a man-lion; as a dwarf; as Parasu-Râma—Râma with the Ax; as Râmakandra, the beautiful moon-like Râma; as Krishna; and as the Buddha. His tenth Avatâra will be as Kalki, who will come to punish evil and reward the good.<sup>3</sup> This peculiar form of uniting different divinities by the thought of successive reappearances of the same Being permits a religion to preserve some show of sympathy with its own history or with its rivals, by still acknowledging in a way the earlier or opposing conceptions of the deity.

But it must not be supposed that these specific motives for the organization of the gods and for the reduction of their number are thought to be all that operate. The imitation of the union which exists in the family and in the larger groups of men; a growing appreciation of the likeness of various natural objects or occurrences, so that they become for the mind a species or class and are united in

<sup>1</sup> Jastrow : *Relig. of Babyl. and Assyr.*, 1898, pp. 118, 140 f.

<sup>2</sup> Sayce : *Religs. of Anc. Egypt and Babyl.*, 1902, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> de la Saussaye : *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, pp. 642 f.



some single spirit ; the tendency to regard those gods as identical that are alike in personality or office, and for the supreme gods to absorb the power of their subordinates, until these, like broken barons, exist hardly as a name ; the thought that divinities which historically are more or less independent are but different manifestations of the same god—these are, perhaps, some of the chief causes which lead the mind from a belief in a disordered horde of spirits to a belief in great ruling spirits or gods. But the desire for organization and for order, as a good in itself, seems to lie deep in human nature. And so we find ourselves at times quite uselessly putting things into system because of a sheer impulse which will not down. The sick man wearily marks off and groups the repeating patterns on the wall ; the monotonous dripping of water, or the ticking of the clock, falls involuntarily into beats and measures, into a rude hierarchy where some of the sounds are regularly raised to honour while others are degraded. So it is probable that behind all particular and historical inducements to organize the gods, there is in the mind a vague and general impulse to bring order out of chaos. And this more general impulse works in and through and vitalizes all the special forces for order that have here been named.

Although these forces of order and unity tend to bring us nearer to a system in which all gods have become one, yet they often exhaust their energy without actually ushering in the day of Monotheism. They prepare the way, but in the final work help comes from other sources. May we, then, consider the mental process by which the belief in a number of gods becomes a belief in one alone.

The motives which induce certain peoples to pass to this final unity are not to be summed up in a phrase, as if some one thing explained the change. The several factors already considered which make for order contribute to the end ; but any one of them, or all together, may easily be too highly prized.

Thus we may lay too much stress, it seems to me, upon the growing appreciation of unity in Nature, leading to the thought that the power behind Nature is likewise one. A feeling for the connection and likeness among natural things, as we have already seen, does help toward monotheism by bringing in a deity for a whole group of objects, and eventually reduces the number of spirits and gods. But the belief in the order and unity of the spiritual world seems to overtake and far outstrip the feeling for the unity of Nature. Some vague sense of the connection of all natural events seems to be *suggested* by the belief in One God, rather than to be the *source* of that belief. In the Book of Job, the most diverse aspects of nature are still viewed in separation—the proud might of the horse, the wonder of the ostrich or of leviathan, the hoar-frost scattered like ashes, the influence of the Pleiades or of Orion—these have no connection one with another in the drama, so far as scientific feeling goes. But they are all brought together in another way—by the thought that without exception they are subject to the will of God. He made them, understands them, holds them in their place. The monotheism of the poet here *leads to* the essential unity of Nature, rather than *issues from* it. The feeling for the unity of Nature as a scientific assertion or ideal, long before any decisive evidence for this assertion is found in the facts themselves (for men even yet assume it, rather than prove it)—a feeling expressed in early science by declaring that all things come from some one substance, perhaps water, or air, or fire—this feeling is doubtless of one blood with the desire for religious unity. Yet the religious unity seems in history to be brother—perhaps elder brother—to the scientific conviction, rather than its child.

And, again, the effect of the conquest of one tribe by another, which at times (but not invariably) makes the gods of the victors rule over the gods of the vanquished—this which has been considered of prime significance for the growth of the belief in a single god, we have already seen to be important, but of no exclusive importance. It helps

to explain how a god, like an earthly monarch, should come to have *more* vassals in heaven, but not how he should come to have *none*. Few, too, are the peoples who meet no one that refuses to be conquered ; and the belief in but a single God was not born even among such irresistible conquerors. Clear monotheism made its first widespread appearance, not in a world-empire like Babylon or Persia, but among an obscure people who were more often the subdued than the subduers of their great and warlike neighbours.

What is it, then, that comes in to assist the many motives working for unity, so that they do not spend their force short of their goal ?

First and foremost among these final and decisive forces comes something more inward, belonging more to the emotions. In its higher development it goes by the name of reverence. And even far down it is an attitude that tends to lessen the value of all things beside the object worshipped, and to drive them from the mind. Now as reverent worship strengthens and becomes a more constant and earnest part of life, the less tolerant can it be of rivalry. The religious heart is not readily divided ; a change of the object of an emotion deep and absorbing comes as a shock and cannot be long endured. Monotheism is thus a kind of spiritual monogamy. The soul becomes wedded to the object of its worship, and there can be no wavering, no minor attachments. Just as the deepening appreciation of marriage brings with it the feeling that but one person can hold to another so intimate a relation, so the deepening of the religious spirit brings the sense that only a single god can be a God to man. It would be idle to suggest that there is any direct historical connection between the development of theism and the development of marriage, except as we have already seen the family pattern influencing the organization of the gods. But that in the family and in religion some common psychic forces are at work is further hinted at by the similarity of their forms. For beside the union to a single husband or a single wife, marriage has its

stage where there are many mates without subordination, corresponding to the unorganized spirits of religion ; the form, moreover, in which one wife is elevated above the rest (as in China at the present day) while subordinate wives are retained as ' little wives '—corresponding to that stage of theism where the supreme god has lesser divinities below him.

But such a feeling as that of reverence must have been greatly supported by the strengthening of social and ethical standards generally—especially the strengthening of that ill-defined sense of misgiving or of stress in connection with our acts, which in its higher form we call the voice of conscience, but which, descending, includes perhaps even the feelings that go with primitive observances like taboo. Now the insistence and the authority which such feelings come to possess soon makes men attribute them to an external and supernatural source. When public opinion requires hospitality to strangers and adherence to one's plighted word, or condemns thievery and murder, these moral requirements usually appear to be due, not to the conscious striving and desire of men, but to some commandment of the gods. Society's fixed forms of rebuke and approval are involuntarily felt to be sanctioned and, indeed, originated in heaven. This projection into a higher realm of what comes later to be called the voice of conscience, requires no very high stage of culture. It is found among many early peoples. Even a little deaf-mute waif of San Francisco, D'Estrella (as Professor James has somewhere told us) felt that his misdeeds were disapproved by the moon ! When on one occasion he stole money, it had to be returned because the moon, who was his dead mother now in the sky, condemned the act.

Now this feeling that the voice of social judgment or of personal conscience is the divine judgment would seem to me to be a strong force in aid of the monotheistic view. The voice of conscience is not a confusion of tongues. Its utterances in any one community are more or less constant



and harmonious. So in becoming the voice of the social conscience the gods must inevitably appear to lay aside their private, partial, and conflicting interests and become a more harmonious and single power. As moral feeling becomes more constant, its divine source appears to be more constant. As conscience continues to speak the same message, and ever with more authority, so the superhuman world tends to lose its jangle and variety, and its oneness becomes more and more clear.

We may also attribute something of the trend toward monotheism to the unreflecting logic of early man. Illustrations have already been given of primitive success in logical classification, where, like a veritable mediæval Realist, the savage gives substantive existence to class-ideas like maple, bee, and beaver. Now, there is another principle of logic, of which perhaps the savage makes no use, but which has an unconscious effect certainly in later times. And it is this. So long as the physical and intellectual and moral attributes of divinity remain relatively poor, it is easy to feel that there could be many examples of such a being. If the gods are but a little more powerful, a little more knowing, a little more scrupulous, than the common man, there is no logical difficulty in supposing that there are nearly as many of them as of men. The sun, the moon, the wind, and numberless other things could each fulfil the rather humble requirements of a god. In this way innumerable divinities can exist without intellectual let or hindrance. But as the conception of godhood becomes richer and rarer in its contents, then every object that is but a little above the common level can no longer exemplify all that the thought of deity means for the man or his society. And when once the thought has become so ennobled as to include unlimited power, resistless will, perfect knowledge, then the consequence would seem inevitable—there can be but one such god. Often the consequence of a thought remains long concealed. But even logic works with time ; and the moral and intellectual elevation of the

gods thus brings nearer the day when all minor and rival deities must disappear. The process could not better be symbolized than by the picture already given, where the great gods of the Babylonians surrender to Marduk their attributes and names.

And finally, as indicating in a crude way the satisfaction of many kinds which the storm-tossed soul may find in this quiet haven of Unity, let me quote from the diary of one who himself experienced the change. "The practical advantage of the new faith was evident to me at once. I had felt it even while I was engaging all my powers to repel it from me. I was taught that there was but one God in the Universe, and not many—over eight millions—as I had formerly believed. The Christian monotheism laid its axe at the root of all my superstitions. All the vows I had made, and the manifold forms of worship with which I had been attempting to appease my angry gods, could now be dispensed with by owning this one God; and my reason and conscience responded 'yea!' One God, and not many, was indeed a glad tidings to my little soul. No more use of saying my long prayers every morning to the four groups of gods situated in the four points of the compass; of repeating a long prayer to every temple I passed by in the streets; and of observing this day for this god and that day for that god, with vows and abstinence peculiar to each. Oh, how proudly I passed by temples after temples with my head erect and conscience clear, with full confidence that they could punish me no longer for my not saying my prayers to them, for I found the God of gods to back and uphold me."<sup>1</sup> Here the practical economy of simplified observances as well as intellectual and emotional economy of looking in but one direction, gives us some further idea of the many influences which unite in monotheism.

The passage from polytheism to monotheism, then, is psychically most complex. It is brought about by many

<sup>1</sup> Uchimura : *Diary of a Japanese Convert* [1895], pp. 23 f.

forces, rather than by one. Inner relief of many kinds, outer nature, political life, social customs, logical consistency, the spirit of adoration—all of these, at least, contribute to the result. It shows how many-sided are the facts of the religious life, and how interwoven they are with what we often mark off as our secular activity.

In the world's history, then, two forces stand in contrast—the impulse to contract and limit the objects of our reverence, and the impulse to value and to worship many different elements. And this tendency to worship more than some single object belongs by no means to a bygone age or to a bygone type of mind. Indeed, it would not be difficult to show that, were it not for what we might call the polytheistic spirit still active in religion, we should not have even monotheism. For although in monotheism the movement toward unity of the gods themselves is complete, there is possible a still further movement toward unity. The unity within the divine character needs to be supplemented (many feel) until it becomes a unity both within and without, a unity all-encompassing and absolute. For in the belief in One God, if the world of Nature and of men do not stand in moral opposition to the divine life, they are at least distinct from the divine. In Pantheism, where all these lose their separateness and individuality and are merged in the one Divine Existence, the love of unity has attained a further goal. Not only the gods now are one, but man and nature only *appear* to be distinguishable from God. In reality all are but parts of his life, are naught apart from him. And in the perfection of that unity, all sense of difference, all consciousness, at last disappears even in the divinity itself.

The conflict between Polytheism and Monotheism represents in the end an opposition of forces in the human mind. For each mind by its very nature must notice and appreciate the variety of the world without and within, and must aim to bring this world into some kind of system and concord.

Yet because of a difference in the intellectual and emotional temperament of men, one or the other tendency often has the upper hand. Some revel in the rich variations, the manifoldness of life, while others are irresistibly impelled to attend only to its sameness, its order, its essential oneness. And this contrast of temper appears in many spheres having no direct connection with religion—in politics, or in science. In each of these, progress is a resultant of two opposing forces present in most individuals or groups of men, but present in unlike strength—the tendency to emphasize the plurality, the disconnection, the opposition of things; and the tendency to insist first and foremost on the bond which holds all things together, on their underlying identity. In politics the tendency to pluralize or to unify is evident in the desire for separate government even among kindred, as well as in the genius for empire which some nations conspicuously display. And within a single political body we often find varying degrees of sympathy with a strong central power—those who strive for a close-knit state, from very love of compactness and unitary action, ranging themselves against those who are for giving play to the constituent parts and are for contrast and independent power locally and in individuals. In both cases there is an appreciation of union, but in differing degrees and with differing sense of the importance of diversity and of local seats of power.

The same contrast of interests is found also in the world of science and of philosophy. The scientist must by instinct be a seeker for order and relation; but in general he has more feeling for the diversity, for the particulars in the world, than has the philosopher. But even philosophers—who give themselves to discovering the relations of all things to one another, and thus do in a measure feel the oneness, whatever be their creed—even among these the relative strength of the two tendencies is perhaps the main factor which decides whether a man shall be a pluralist or a monist. The believers in the reality of the Many range



themselves against the believers in the One, and the clash of their arms has resounded from the times of Democritus and Parmenides even unto this day. So the self-same forces which in religion lead to the variety or the oneness of the gods, are active in the practical and the speculative life of the statesman and the metaphysician.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN GOD

**B**EYOND the contrast as to the number of the gods, there are strikingly different ways of conceiving the inner nature of divinity. God may be thought to have definite character and attributes—as definite as a man possesses—or he may be regarded as a Being vague and inconceivable, of which perhaps nothing further can in truth be said or thought. Let me give instances of this opposition in representing the divine.

Almost any religion that employs the pictorial or dramatic way of representing the gods, or in which there is a belief that the gods may be present bodily to men as divine animals or divine kings, or may appear sensibly upon some special occasion—as in the story that Pisistratus was brought back to power in Athens by Athene herself in full armour, as the people at the time are said to have believed<sup>1</sup>—in all such cases the divinity is given form and outline both of body and of inner life. Such definite character may be low ; as in the malicious gods of many savage tribes. Or it may be inherently weak ; as in those divinities whose strength depends upon the offerings to them. Sirius, for example, in his distress declares that if sacrifices had been offered him in his own name he would have been given the strength of ten horses, the strength of ten camels, of ten bulls, of ten mountains, of ten rivers.<sup>2</sup> Or the definite character may be strong and exalted. Ukko, the great

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, I, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Zend-Avesta, Tir Yast, VI, 24 (XXIII, 100).

god of the Finns, is Father of the heavens, benignant, given to good counsel ;<sup>1</sup> he is the creator, and is kind and full of mercy ;<sup>2</sup> he knows all things, is wiser than the world-magicians ;<sup>3</sup> from him comes all sweetness, all beauty ;<sup>4</sup> he alone can give completion to the work.<sup>5</sup>

Likewise the character of Ahura Mazda in the Zend-Avesta is noble without obscurity. He is the creator, the sustainer ; he is all-conquering, glorious ; he is most beneficent, the wisest of the wise. He is thus the God of force, of knowledge, of beauty, and goodwill.<sup>6</sup> In the faith of Islam, too, God appears in fairly clear and intelligible form—though he speaks with none except by special inspiration or by messenger or from behind a veil.<sup>7</sup> He is merciful, compassionate, forgiving, clement.<sup>8</sup> God is “ the mighty, the knowing, the forgiver of sin, the acceptor of repentance, keen at punishment, long-suffering ! there is no god but He ! to whom the journey is ! ”<sup>9</sup> And in that ‘ verse of the throne ’ which is among the great portions of the Koran, the mind is carried far beyond the region of definite picture, but not beyond the region of definite thought : “ God, there is no God but He, the living, the self-subsistent. Slumber takes Him not, nor sleep. His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Who is it that intercedes with Him save by His permission ? He knows what is before them and what behind them, and they comprehend not aught of His knowledge but of what He pleases. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and it tires Him not to guard them both, for He is high and grand.”<sup>10</sup>

The religion of the Jewish canon, though at times leaning toward the indefinite and unknowable God, is in general of an opposite temper. Jehovah has a positive and in-

<sup>1</sup> Kalevala, Rune II (Crawford, p. 25).

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, Rune VII (Crawford, p. 93).

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, Rune IX (Crawford, p. 118).

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, Rune IX (Crawford, p. 122).

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, Rune IX (Crawford, p. 124).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ormazd Yast, 12-15 (XXIII, 27 f.).

<sup>7</sup> Koran, XLII (IX, 210).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, II (VI, 22) ; III (VI, 65), etc.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, XL (IX, 190).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, II (VI, 40).

telligible character. He is interested in his people ; he blesses them when they keep his law, he shows his anger when they transgress ; he is jealous, condoning no worship of gods other than himself. He is merciful and forgiving when men turn from their evil ways.

Christianity, falling heir to this Jewish faith, retained and even strengthened the conviction that God had a nature sharp in outline. He could not only be known to men, but his character could actually be revealed in human form, in Jesus Christ. Such as this Man is, with whom you walk and eat, whose words you hear and whose thought you understand—such is God himself. His character is the perfection of human life ; it is nobler than common man's, but no less distinct and intelligible. This seems to have been the thought of the Founder, and the Church has with fair agreement resisted the effort made by many of its own number to substitute the worship of a formless Infinite, a God whose true nature was for man quite inconceivable.

Thus in trying to present the belief in a God of definite nature and intelligible to us, we have already caught momentarily the opposite view ; and to this we should now turn undividedly.

And first it would seem as if the best instances of the Divine regarded as indefinite were found in the recognition of an Unknown God. The Apostle Paul, in his address to the Athenians upon Mars Hill, speaks of an altar to such a divinity ;<sup>1</sup> and from other sources we know that this was not a solitary instance with the Greeks. There were altars of gods called Unknown at the harbour of Phalerum, and an altar sacred to Unknown Gods at Olympia.<sup>2</sup> An explanation of this strange worship of the Greeks is that it provided for divinities as yet unnamed and unidentified and who, perhaps, should be placated in times of stress, like that of plague—somewhat as when an earthquake came, the

<sup>1</sup> Acts, XVII, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, I, 1, 4 ; V, 14, 8.



Romans, not being sure what divinity had caused the trouble, proclaimed a holy day, yet left it undecided to whom the day was holy.<sup>1</sup>

Very different from this is the faith that has, in a measure, already identified the God and given him a personal name, yet feels no clear insight into his mysterious nature. This baffled recognition, this knowledge both successful and defeated, seems to have been felt by those Indians of Peru toward their god Pachacamac—at least after the Incas had influenced them to worship another god, the Sun. “When the Indians were asked who Pachacamac was, they replied that he it was who gave life to the universe, and supported it; but that they knew him not, for they had never seen him, and for this reason they did not build temples to him, nor offer him sacrifices. But that they worshipped him in their hearts (that is mentally), and considered him to be an unknown God.”<sup>2</sup> The sense of ignorance of the god is here perhaps due to the decline of a faith at one time clearer, before the Incas had introduced among the subject Indians some confusion by a new worship. But whatever may have been the occasion, there seems to have been clearly recognized an incomplete acquaintance with the Divine—as there was elsewhere in native America by a King of ancient Tezcuco.<sup>3</sup>

But even more impressive in many ways is the account, given by men of the Amazulu of South Africa, of the great gods far away who are not clearly known, and of the spirits near and definite, to whom prayer is offered: “Unkulunkulu is no longer known. It is he who was the first man; he broke off in the beginning. We do not know his wife; and the ancients do not tell us that he had a wife.”

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, in Vol. II of his ed. of Pausanias, 1898, pp. 33 ff.

<sup>2</sup> First Part of the *Royal Commentaries of the Yncas*, by Garcilasso de la Vega, tr. Markham, 1869, p. 107. That this was not exactly true of all the believers in Pachacamac is clear, for there was a great temple to him in a valley of that name “about four leagues from the City of the Kings”—a temple which the conquering Incas, by a compromise, turned partly into a temple of their own god, the Sun. See *Travels of Pedro Cieza de Leon*, tr. Markham, 1864, pp. 251 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft: *Native Races*, 1886, III, 197, and cf. p. 191.

"Tell me if at the present time there are any who pray to Unkulunkulu?"

"There are none. They pray to the Amatonga; they honour them that they may come and save them."

"Who are the Amatonga?"

"The Amadhlozi, men who have died."

But as for Unkulunkulu, the 'old-old' one, there was no evidence that he cared to have men know him, and so he was unworshipped: "They speak truly who say, he was not worshipped; and I agree with them," says the native narrator; "For it is not worship when people see things, as rain, or food, such as corn, and say, 'Yes, these things were made by Unkulunkulu,' but no such word has come to them from him as this, 'I have made for you these things that you might know me by them.' He made them that men might eat and see them, and nothing more."

But vague and distant as is this old-old One, there is a 'heavenly King' of whom even less is known—nothing, save that the thunder is the noise of his play: "We can give some account of what belongs to Unkulunkulu; we can scarcely give any account of what belongs to the heavenly king." "We say that Unkulunkulu was first; we do not know what belongs to that king. There remained that word only about the heaven; we know nothing of his mode of life, nor of the principles of his government."<sup>1</sup>

This is, in a simpler way, the same feeling and conviction that appears at times in the Book of Job:

"Behold, God is great, and we know him not;  
The number of his years is unsearchable."

"Out of the north cometh golden splendour:  
God hath upon him terrible majesty.  
Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out."<sup>2</sup>

This was felt in ancient Egypt;<sup>3</sup> it is rare and momentary

<sup>1</sup> Callaway: *Religious System of the Amazulu*, 1870, pp. 1, 8, 17, 20.

<sup>2</sup> XXXVI, 26; XXXVII, 22 f.

<sup>3</sup> Book of the Dead, XLII, 21 ff.; LXII, 18 ff.; LXXIX; CX, 14, etc.; and see the Papyrus of Nesi-Khonsu.

also in the Koran, and felt perhaps by some poet of the Vedas<sup>1</sup>—perhaps also by some groping penitent in ancient Babylonia.<sup>2</sup>

This baffling of intelligence which the religious mind so often feels, and which at first might seem the complete and perfect illustration of Indefiniteness in worship, is in truth more often a compromise between the vague and the definite. For in so far as purpose and thought are attributed to divinity, the Divine in some measure appears clear in outline if not in all detail, since from their own experience men know what it means to have thought and purpose, and these give at once a certain kinship to our nature. Yet in so far as God's ways are declared to be not our ways, and his thoughts not ours, and indeed past finding out, divinity, while preserving its definiteness of 'form,' loses all 'material' definiteness—if a scholastic distinction may be employed.

Only in the higher and more reflective faiths, especially of the Orient, do we observe, unchecked and reaching its goal, the impulse to conceive of an absolutely indefinite divinity. In the instances so far seen, man's ignorance of God has been silently attributed to some aloofness, some separation, due perhaps to human disobedience; man knows not the Divine because of some obstacle or distance which cuts off opportunity for acquaintance. The deity is still felt to possess definite character and to be knowable, were mere circumstances somewhat changed. The further and extreme movement of faith is when the difficulty is felt to lie, not in circumstance, but in the very nature of the Divine. And this becomes not only unknown but essentially unknowable. God now is regarded as the Being indescribable, escaping all the limit and restraint which imagination or thought imposes on its object.

<sup>1</sup> Vedic Hymns, X, 121, at least according to Müller's understanding of it (XXXII, 1 ff.), with which others do not agree; cf. Ludwig: *Der Rigveda*, 1876-83, II, 575 ff., and Wilson: *Rig-Veda Samhitā*, 1888, VI, 335 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Zimmern: *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, 1885, pp. 61 ff. The statement above is put with caution because the 'agnostic' element does not appear in Sayce's translation of this psalm, *Records of the Past*, VII, 153 f.

Since they speak perhaps more as philosophers than as leaders and representatives of religion, we may pass with a bare mention men like Plotinus, who hold that the One is not to be spoken of as that which 'is,' nor as 'the good'; since it is incomprehensible, is that to which in strict truth no predicate can apply.<sup>1</sup> Yet philosophical expressions like these are representative in this sense, that the same spirit is present also in clear religion—as in much of the sacred literature of India. Brahma is described in the Bhagavadgîtâ as without beginning or end, as neither existent nor non-existent, as possessed of the qualities of the senses, yet without senses. Yet Brahma has ears on all sides; heads, faces, on all sides. Brahma is devoid of all qualities, is within all things and yet without them, is movable and immovable, is unknowable through its subtlety, is far and near.<sup>2</sup> Thus no sooner is anything said of Brahma than it is denied; and whatever is denied is at once affirmed. Opposite is set upon opposite; and in the resultant confusion the mind finds no place to rest.

An equal blur of outline is in the description, in the same book, of the deity now called Krishna: "I am the producer and destroyer of the whole universe. There is nothing else, O Dhanañgaya! higher than myself; all this is woven upon me, like numbers of pearls upon a thread. I am the taste in water, O son of Kuntî! I am the light of the sun and moon. I am 'Om' in all the Vedas, sound in space, and manliness in human beings; I am the fragrant smell in the earth, refulgence in the fire; I am life in all beings, and penance in those who perform penance. Know me, O Son of Prîthâ! to be the eternal seed of all beings; I am the discernment of the discerning ones, and I the glory of the glorious. I am also the strength, unaccompanied by fondness or desire, of the strong. And, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! I am love unopposed to piety among all beings. And all entities which are of the

<sup>1</sup> Plotinus, *Enneades*, VI, 7, 38; VI, 9, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, XIII (VIII, 103 f.).



quality of goodness, and those that are of the quality of passion and of darkness, know that they are, indeed, all from me ; I am not in them, but they are all in me." Even the delusion which hides all this truth from men is Krishna's, is divine.<sup>1</sup> Here, as for another Indian mystic, the universal Being may be excluded from nothing ; it must taste not Truth alone, but also Error :

" Zu schmecken Wahrheit und Täuschung,  
Ward zweiseitlich das grosse Selbst." <sup>2</sup>

But to continue our main account and feel more fully the want of outline. All things are but the Deity in his many forms. The God declares : " I am the argument of controversialists." " I myself am time inexhaustible, and I the creator whose faces are in all directions. I am death who seizes all, and the source of what is to be." " Of cheats, I am the game of dice." " I am the goodness of the good." <sup>3</sup> " I am the sacred verse. I, too, am the sacrificial butter, and I the fire, I the offering. I am the father of this universe, the mother, the creator ; the grandsire, the thing to be known, the means of sanctification, the syllable Om," the sacred scripture, " the goal, the sustainer, the lord, the supervisor, the residence, the asylum, the friend, the source, and that in which it merges, the support, the receptacle, and the inexhaustible seed. I cause heat and I send forth and stop showers. I am immortality and also death ; and I, O Arguna ! am that which is and that which is not." <sup>4</sup> Here the divinity loses character by the very multitude of things with which he is identified. He is truth and he is delusion ; he is the prayer of the worshipper, the sin of the sinner ; he is all that exists on earth and all that exists in heaven ; he is even what is and what is not ! Let this suffice to illustrate the conception of God without form and void, even by reason of his all-inclusiveness.

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, VII (VIII, 74 f.).

<sup>2</sup> Maitrâyana Upanishad, VII, 11, 8, Deussen's tr., *Sechsig Upan.*, 1897, p. 370.

<sup>3</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, X (VIII, 90 f.).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IX (VIII, 83 f.).

We have thus the competing tendencies before us, and should now attend to the motives which control them. But these motives are so intimately joined with those which lie behind the conceptions to be described a little later that the desire to avoid tiresome repetition urges a delay of the discussion until then. Nor should one omit to say that many of the causes that lead to the distinction between the definite and the characterless God are exactly those which help to divide the monotheist from the polytheist.

In believing that God has a definite character, the thought is animated by some of the better spirit in the older polytheism. The concrete good seen in a purified human society is still retained in the belief in a God of character, as in the belief in many Gods. But there is this difference: that instead of divinity existing as it does for the polytheist, in a society of gods as well as men, the only associates of the God of definite character are men and man-like spirits. The patterns of actual life, where there is purpose limited by set conditions, where there is a willingness to have comradeship even with some thwarting and loss of absolute sway, are appreciated and copied. The pattern of human life which polytheism accepts naïvely is now no longer slavishly followed; it is idealized; but its subtle essence is still preserved. The love of variety and *real* opposition here enjoys its rights. For the Unity of God is prevented from going to an extreme, by the feeling that there are also realities distinct from him—namely, nature and men. His personality is limited and defined by their existence. There is thus a feeling for personality, for the individual set over against other individuals, a social ideal where subjects have rights and freedom, as against the despotic ideal where the monarch is all and in all, and can say, *L'état, c'est moi*. It seems hardly a matter of chance that Christianity, pushing on among peoples most interested in the rights of persons as separate and distinct individuals, has with all its high development been willing to carry the Unity of God to no

such extreme that nature and men are completely blurred and lost in the One Existence.

In those for whom the Ideal has become characterless, the causes which work toward unity have brushed aside and swept over all opposing forces. The God of the monotheist is a jealous God ; he will brook no rival. And this jealousy in him is in part but a reflection of the jealousy for his glory and honour which his adorer feels. But why stop with the thought that there are no other gods than he ? To express as reasoning what in the main is not reasoned at all, but is a matter of feeling or impulse—If God is really divine, why should he have a rival of any kind whatever ? His supremacy in beauty and wisdom and power must not only make him *more* beautiful and wise and powerful than all besides, his must be the *only* beauty, the *only* wisdom, the *only* power. Whatsoever things seem to have these qualities must either be illusions or else parts of the Divine Being himself. All operations, whether in the physical world or in the mental, are *his* operations ; there is nothing that has life and power but he. But not alone what is fair and good must be brought within the circle of divinity. Existence of every kind, whether it be good or ill, true or false, must be included in his nature. And in the final intoxication of thought and feeling, even the non-existent is declared to be of him ! “ I, O Arguna ! am that which is and that which is not.” The movement toward unity which in Monotheism is checked when the gods are brought to oneness, here goes on and on. Man and Nature and God must be, not simply organized into an harmonious order with God as maker and ruler and the goal of all desire, but so compacted that nothing has reality but the One.

But the Unity, the rivalless existence of the One, which is here attained by bringing everything *in*, may also be attained by shutting everything *out*. The divinity who is identified with all things whatever—with stones and clouds, fire and water, truth and error, saints and sinners, men and gods, with that which is and that which is not—is, after all,

a strange unity. It is one that has endless contrast and opposition within it. It is a harmony made up of discords. Many a soul that would have his God a harmonious One, nevertheless feels that anything is more divine than harmony such as has just been described; and so God comes to be conceived in the very opposite way. "Let us at any cost have his inner nature at peace," we might imagine such a one saying; "And since qualities and attributes always go by pairs, and suggest contrast and discord and multiplicity—since 'existence' suggests 'non-existence,' 'strength' 'weakness,' and 'goodness' 'evil'—while yet God's inner unity is perfect, is there any way to conceive this inner perfection except by denying it all specific attributes? His nature, to be harmonious, must be beyond all quality. He is that One of whom nothing can be affirmed." This is something of the spirit in which Lâo-tze seeks to conceive the peace and unity of the Divine Mystery. "We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it 'the Equable.' We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it 'the Inaudible.' We try to grasp it, and we do not get hold of it, and we name it 'the Subtle.' With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description: and hence we blend them together and obtain The One."

"Its upper part is not bright, and its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in its action, it yet cannot be named, and then it again returns and becomes nothing. This is called the Form of the Formless, and the Semblance of the Invisible; this is called the Fleeting and the Indeterminable."<sup>1</sup> Where Brahma and Krishna, in the passages quoted some pages back, are described by endless affirmations, the Supreme for the Chinese mystic is described mainly by denial on denial. To the logician the difference between these two methods may not seem important; but for the student of psychology the difference is great. The worshipper in one case feels the closeness of divinity to the very things at hand, they *are* the divinity in some of its

<sup>1</sup> Tâo Teh King, I, 14 (XXXIX, 57).



many forms. God is felt to flow around and through one's very being, and the separateness of one's self is lost in the sense of the nearness, the enfolding presence of the One. The other type feels most of all the refinement, the subtlety of the Divine, the infinite contrast between it and all things that can be seen or inwardly experienced. The Absolute is that which is *different* from all things ; it is that which is ever just beyond our thought. Each of these Unities, attained in ways so much alike and yet so opposite, is thus markedly different from the other, and together they illustrate the extremes to which the desire for unity may lead. But they also lead beyond themselves, to an opposition, in connection with which they may be better discussed and understood ; and to this opposition we should now pass.

But of the present opposition itself, it is perhaps clear that in the conceptions of divinity which in their late coming take deep and wide hold of human nature, both conscious ignorance and knowledge are in union—God is at once both known and beyond knowledge, is both definite and obscure. It is with him as with all great instances of personality ; there is distance beyond distance, and no one can search it out ; and yet a broad plan and mode of action in such personality may seem to us clear. In the desire to avoid mystery, or unconscious of it, some make God all known and within reach ; while others feel only his inscrutableness. But happily these extremes are less common, and the mind as a rule responds with more balance, and reveres a God that is at once known and unknown.

## CHAPTER XXII

### DIVINITY AT HAND, AND AFAR OFF

THE human race has moved, almost as if bewildered, between the alternatives of a God who comes close to man, who knows and sympathizes with our human lot, and a God dwelling apart and beyond all intercourse with men. And in a way, this contrast has already been evident in speaking of God as known and as unknown. But the relation of the divinity to human knowledge is by no means the same as its relation to human sympathy (though often the two are most closely connected), and the God who seems vague and unknown to our intelligence need not be remote and unapproachable for feeling. For this reason the differences of distance between man and God have not yet been fully told.

Among many savage tribes there is a belief in two kinds of gods—those that are intimately concerned with man's affairs, and those that are remote from men, both in locality and in interest. There are gods near and liable to injure if not propitiated, or near and friendly, and who protect men from the distant evil; and there are other gods who are believed to exist, but who are not in touch with men, either for good or ill. A systematic account would clearly distinguish between mere physical or spatial separation, and that more serious gulf which comes of want of sympathy; but I shall let the two appear together, though more attention will be given to the want of interest and sympathy. I shall, however, try to keep distinct some of the surprisingly variable forms in which this contrast is expressed.

The difference of spiritual relation just spoken of has long been recognized by those familiar with African belief. The Abbé Proyart, over a century ago, found there the acknowledgment of a Supreme Being called *Zambi*, who loved justice and created all that is good. He, the natives felt, could be relied upon always to be favourable, and no especial attention need be paid him. So all their efforts went to appeasing the god of wickedness—*Zambi-a-n'bi*—who, delighting in disorder and evil, counselled injustice and crime, and caused injury and accident, disease and death.<sup>1</sup>

But we have other pictures in which the constant favour of the god seems less assured. "The prevailing notion seems to be," says Wilson, more particularly of Northern Guinea, "that God, after having made the world and filled it with inhabitants, retired to some remote corner of the universe, and has allowed the affairs of the world to come under the control of evil spirits; and hence the only religious worship that is ever performed is directed to these spirits."<sup>2</sup> And by another writer we are told: "The god, in the sense we use the word, is in essence the same in all of the Bantu tribes I have met with on the Coast: a non-interfering and therefore a negligible quantity. . . . They regard their god as the creator of man, plants, animals, and the earth, and they hold that having made them, he takes no further interest in the affair. But not so the crowd of spirits with which the universe is peopled, they take only too much interest, and the Bantu wishes they would not, and is perpetually saying so in his prayers, a large percentage whereof amounts to 'Go away, we don't want you.' " And again, we are told by the same writer: "No trace of sun-worship have I ever found. The firmament is, I believe, always the great indifferent and neglected god, the Nyan Kupon of the Tschwi, and the Anzambe, Nzam, etc., of the Bantu races. The African thinks this god has great power

<sup>1</sup> "History of Loango, Kakongo," etc., in Pinkerton's *Voyages*, 1814, XVI, 594.

<sup>2</sup> *Western Africa*, 1856, p. 209.

if he would only exert it, and when things go very badly with him, when the river rises higher than usual and sweeps away his home and his plantations; when the smallpox stalks through the land, and day and night the corpses float down the river past him, and he finds them jammed among his canoes that are tied to the beach, and choking up his fish traps; and then when at last the death-wail over its victims goes up night and day from his own village, he will rise up and call upon this great god in the terror maddened by despair, that he may hear and restrain the evil workings of these lesser devils.”<sup>1</sup>

But the idea that the Greatest is remote in place or in sympathy is found also among the natives of America. The Great Spirit of the Indians is at times regarded as a being who, after making the world, has left its actual government and the control of men's affairs to inferior and antagonistic spirits.<sup>2</sup> And among the Tuelches of Patagonia there is the belief in a good Spirit, but he is thought to live careless of mankind. The malicious spirits, however, and especially the chief demon of them, are active and eager to do men harm.<sup>3</sup> The state of belief here is not unlike that found in Borneo, where the natives of the valley of Barito hold that the air is filled with countless spirits called *hantoes*, which watch over and seek to defend every object in the land, and to bring sickness and misfortune upon men. So these spirits and the powerful angels—*sangsangs*—must be appeased; while the supreme God, the fountain of all good, is neglected.<sup>4</sup>

It is strange, but significant, perhaps, of the mind's suspicion of its own character and situation, that in most instances the far-away spirit is good, while the spirits near by are bent on evil. But occasionally the reverse is true. In Australia, where the feeling seems to be exceedingly rare that spirits actually help or injure men, the Binbinga

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley: *Travels in West Africa*, 1897, pp. 442 f., 508.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft: *Archives of Aborig. Knowl.*, 1860, I, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Musters: *At Home with the Patagonians*, 1871, pp. 179 f.

<sup>4</sup> Frazer: *Golden Bough*, 1900, III, 47 f., and cf. p. 51, etc., and Tylor: *Primitive Culture*, 1903, II, 337, 341, 348, etc., for other striking examples.



tribe, nevertheless, believe that the sky is inhabited by two spirits ill-disposed toward men—spirits called Mundagadji, covered with white down, and having knives in place of arms. Their evil designs are constantly being frustrated by a friendly spirit, Ulurkura, living less distant, in the woods, and ever on the watch to stop these hostile spirits of the sky. And the Mara tribe have a belief similar in almost all respects, save in the names of the hostile and friendly beings.<sup>1</sup>

In Ashantee, however, there is still another variant from the commoner view, in that the heights of good and evil are both far distant. For not only is the god who created all and is omniscient conceived of as withdrawn from the world, leaving this to take its own course under the rule of subordinate powers; but also the highest of evil spirits, the Enemy of men, is thought to live apart in some vague and far Beyond.<sup>2</sup>

And for the last of the variations on this theme, as found in lower races, the belief should be mentioned in which the god now distant was intimate with men in earlier days. It is one of the popular legends of Aquapim, lying back from the African Gold Coast, that heaven once was nearer men than it now is; the supreme God and Creator himself then gave men instruction in deepest wisdom; but later he withdrew from them, and now dwells far away in Heaven.<sup>3</sup> And from another source the same belief appears widespread in Africa that God once was near, but now is far away: "In connection with the gods of West Africa," Miss Kingsley tells us, "I may remark that in almost all the series of native tradition there, you will find accounts of a time when there was direct intercourse between the gods or spirits that live in the sky and men. That intercourse is always said to have been cut off by some human error; for example, the Fernando Po people say that once upon a time there was no trouble or serious disturbance upon earth because there

<sup>1</sup> Spencer and Gillen: *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, 1904, pp. 501 f.

<sup>2</sup> Waitz: *Anthropologie*, II, 171.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 171.

was a ladder, made like the one you get palm-nuts with, 'only long, long'; and this ladder reached from earth to heaven, so the gods could go up and down it and attend personally to mundane affairs. But one day a cripple boy started to go up the ladder, and he had got a long way up when his mother saw him and went up in pursuit. The gods, horrified at the prospect of having boys and women invading heaven, threw down the ladder, and have since left humanity severely alone." The people of Timneh, north-east of Sierra Leone, though possibly the Arabs have influenced the form in which the legend runs, have a similar belief that in olden times God was friendly with men; but later, by man's disobedience, he was forced to act with sternness.<sup>1</sup> It is like the Greek belief that men of the ancient time, by reason of their righteousness, were intimate with the gods, and sat and feasted with them<sup>2</sup>—part of that persistent vision, appearing to so many people, of a golden age in the past, when heaven was close to earth, and plenty and virtue were over all.

Thus the difference in the nearness of spiritual powers to men need not be illustrated solely from savage thought. It is seen in varying forms almost universally. Some of the gods of Greece stood on quite a different footing from that of others; at Athens, the goddess Athene seems to have come closer and been practically more significant than Zeus, the more powerful and august divinity. And in Greece there was, too, an active worship of the ancient god Kronos,<sup>3</sup> although, according to myth, he had long ago been defeated by Zeus and chained in gloomy Tartarus. In Babylonia, the great god Marduk had behind him older gods to whom less reverence was paid. And the same is true of the religion of Egypt, where Ra, the chief of the gods, was seen against a background of vague and more distant divine powers from which he had sprung.

In many of these cases we have two conceptions of

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley: *Travels in West Africa*, 1897, pp. 507 f.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Pausanias, VIII, 2, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Farnell: *The Cults of the Greek States*, 1896-1907, I, 27 f.

divinity, peaceably dwelling together in the same person's mind, some of the gods belonging to one type, while others are of different nature. But again, the religious impulse, throwing all logical consistency to the winds, may entertain in succession conflicting notions of the same divinity. In the wonderful dialogue between the disguised god Krishna and his charioteer Arguna, the god declares that he cares naught for men. "I am alike to all beings," he says, "to me none is hateful, none dear."<sup>1</sup> The spirit of piety can thus, in one of its moods, describe divinity in words that might almost as well have come from the lips of some cynic. But again, there is in this same dialogue a divine interest in men. "Out of compassion for them," the god destroys, "with the brilliant lamp of knowledge, the darkness within them, born of ignorance."<sup>2</sup> The conflicting emotions of attraction and awful distance are also shown where Arguna prays forgiveness for having called the deity his friend, or for thinking of him as a friend, and not knowing his greatness who is indefinable. But almost at the next instant he cries to God : "Be pleased, O God ! to pardon me, as a father pardons his son, or a friend his friend, or a husband his beloved."<sup>3</sup> This but makes clearer the close connection of these two motives in the Ideal, that to the same god in this case such opposite traits can be ascribed, or toward him such contrasting feelings can be felt in rapid alternation.

Yet such an alternation does not always come ; but the conviction is fixed upon only one of these alternatives, and the other is for all time put away. Thus the Jains of India believe that the Supreme Being "has nothing in common with the things of this world, and does not interfere at all in the government of this vast universe. Virtue and vice, good and evil, are indifferent to him." He rewards no man for good or evil, but remains aloof, absorbed in the contemplation of his own perfections, enjoying the bliss of

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgîtâ, IX (VIII, 85).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, X (VIII, 87).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XI (VIII, 97), with alteration of the translator's extra-textual words.

his own complete existence.<sup>1</sup> And in the ancient Imperial Religion of China the Supreme Power has neither love nor hatred toward individuals—a conception of the Divine held also by Lâo-tze, who says that to Heaven and Earth, as to the Sages, all things are alike; there is no real benevolence upon high, and men and all things are dealt with “as the dogs of grass are dealt with”—used and thrown aside.<sup>2</sup>

So far our attention has been upon the many forms and degrees of the belief that the divine is far separate from the human. Only in a minor way and as an incident has the nearness of God and man been illustrated; and to this some fuller heed should now be paid.

The expression of the feeling of a closer bond, like that of its opposite, assumes many different forms. And as the first of these there might be taken the belief that some god is the great ancestor of men—as Unkulunkulu of the Zulus;<sup>3</sup> or Tii or Taaroa of the Tahitians;<sup>4</sup> or Maui of the New Zealanders;<sup>5</sup> or He-no, god of Thunder, Rain, and Cloud, of whom the Iroquois called themselves the grandchildren.<sup>6</sup> This feeling is also found in those men of Ashantee for whom God had, besides the name ‘my Maker,’ another name, ‘my Great Friend.’<sup>7</sup> Something of the same bond is expressed in another way when, in creating man, the divinity is pictured as putting into him a part of his own being. In Genesis Adam’s soul is the breath of God himself, and in the Chaldean account of creation the god Bel cuts off his own head, and from his blood mixed with earth the gods make mankind, who for this reason are intelligent and partake of the divine knowledge.<sup>8</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> Dubois: *Hindu Manners*, tr. Beauchamp, 1897, Appendix I, p. 697.

<sup>2</sup> Tão Teh King, I, 5, 1 (XXXIX, 50); de la Saussaye: *Manual*, Engl. tr., 1891, p. 346.

<sup>3</sup> Callaway: *Religious System of the Amazulu*, 1870, Pt. I.

<sup>4</sup> Ellis: *Polynesian Researches*, 1831, I, 111; cf. I, 323.

<sup>5</sup> Schirren: *Die Wandersagen der Neuseeländer*, 1856, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Morgan: *League of the Iroquois*, 1851, p. 159.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson: *Western Africa*, 1856, p. 209, note.

<sup>8</sup> Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, 1876, p. 42.



all those widespread stories of the intercourse between heaven and earth, many of them gross and many beautiful—the gods appearing and speaking with men, or coming for a longer time in human form to dwell on earth—these testify to a feeling of the nearness of the divine to the human, in interest as well as in character. The very marks of the relationship are often borne upon the body. The savage is tattooed with the sign of the spirit or god to whom he belongs or which bears some special relationship to him. The priests of Isis in some cases seem to have carried the mark of divinity upon their forehead.<sup>1</sup> Those who, in the Book of Revelation, were marked upon their foreheads or their hands; or those in the middle ages who were miraculously favoured to bear the stigmata of the crucified Lord, are but scattered illustrations of the belief that the supernatural power does in some visible way mark those who are chosen and are especially near.

Or the closeness of the connection may be expressed as an actual dependence of the gods upon the kind offices of men—a doctrine which in Buddhism appears at times in the thought that the Prince Gotama is even the Teacher of the gods. In the earlier Indian religion, that of the Vedas, while there is much prayer for blessings upon the worshippers, yet there is also the thought that the prayer and sacrifice are of benefit to the gods. “This prayer from us is acceptable to you,” says the worshipper to his divinities, “like the springs of heaven to a thirsty soul longing for water.”<sup>2</sup> The strength of the gods rises with the offerings to them.<sup>3</sup> The hymns give strength and beauty to Agni, the devouring flame.<sup>4</sup> And the same thought is in the Zend-Avesta. Strength increases to the gods many fold when sacrifice is offered them.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dennison: “A New Head of the So-called Scipio Type,” *Amer. Journ. of Archæol.*, sec. series, IX (1905), 11 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Vedic Hymns, V, 57, 1 (XXXII, 340).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 165, 4 (XXXII, 179).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 8, 5 (XLVI, 213); cf. III, 5, 2 (XLVI, 240).

<sup>5</sup> Tir Yast, 24 (XXIII, 100).

But there is a dependence less physical and more spiritual where a longing for religious intercourse is felt to exist, even in divinity. The Goddess of the Heavenly Spring, from which all earthly waters flow, Ardvi Sûra Anâhita, drives forward on her chariot, "longing for men, and thinking thus in her heart: 'Who will praise me? Who will offer me a sacrifice, with libations cleanly prepared and well-strained, together with the Haoma and meat? To whom shall I cleave, who cleaves unto me, and thinks with me, and bestows gifts upon me, and is of goodwill unto me?'"<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew Scriptures, though not forgetful of the unsearchable heights of the divine nature, represent in many ways—in history, as in the Book of Joshua or of Chronicles; in drama, as in the Book of Job; in prayers and sacred hymns, such as the Psalms; in rebuke and exhortation, by the Prophets—God's interest in his chosen people. He watches their every action; he gives them laws to govern their private and public life; he rules them through his representatives; he punishes them by the hands of their enemies; he delivers them from bondage and oppression. Men live only to serve the Lord; but Heaven itself often seems to exist but to guide man toward the divine ideal. Though he demands much, he also gives much. Thus God is near to earth. He is man's place of refuge, his fortress, he covers man with his pinions, he is a habitation where no evil comes.<sup>2</sup> He leads his people like a shepherd, he carries the young lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.<sup>3</sup> And after sin, the repentant may turn to God with the hope of forgiveness, even as in ancient Babylonia the heart burdened with sin appealed to God in penitential psalms.<sup>4</sup>

With the later Arabs, as we find their faith reflected in the Koran, there was insistence both on the greatness of

<sup>1</sup> Âbân Yast, II, 11 (XXIII, 56).

<sup>2</sup> Psalm XCI.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah, XL, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Zimmern: *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, 1885; and cf. Sayce: *Records of the Past*, VII, 153 f.

God, which lifted him high above humanity, and on his nearness to those who were submissive. His sublimity is not to be carelessly set aside by human confidence: "The Jews and the Christians say, 'We are the sons of God and his beloved.' " Say to them—the spirit charges the Prophet—" 'Why, then, does he punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are mortals of those whom he has created! He pardons whom he pleases, and punishes whom he pleases, for God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and what is between the two, and unto him the journey is.' "<sup>1</sup> Yet for all his unsearchable greatness, or perhaps because of this, he enters, by his knowledge, into everything that man thinks or does: "We created man, and we know what his soul whispers; for we are nigher to him than his jugular vein!" "<sup>2</sup> "Dost thou not see that God knows what is in the heavens, and what is in the earth? and that there cannot be a privy discourse of three but he makes the fourth? nor five but he makes the sixth? nor less than that nor more, but that he is with them wheresoe'er they be?" "<sup>3</sup> But this God that pervades all and knows the greatest and the least, is also moved by man's appeal, and grants what the faithful soul requires. He declares to the Prophet: "When my servants ask thee concerning me, then, verily I am near; I answer the prayer's prayer whene'er he prays to me. So let them ask me for an answer, and let them believe in me; haply they may be directed aright." "<sup>4</sup>

When we pass to the religion of the New Testament, we find the nearness and love of God to man reasserted in gentler form and made the central thought. Jesus is filled with a desire to heal men in body and mind; he sympathizes with affliction, he sympathizes no less with kindly pleasure. And he declares that the life he lives among men is a faithful picture of God's ways. God desires human fellowship; he wishes to sup with men. As a father he is waiting for the return of the petulant boy who

<sup>1</sup> Koran, V (VI, 100).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, L (IX, 242 f.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, LVIII (IX, 271).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II (VI, 26).<sup>3</sup>

has left the family roof ; and the son is returning to the home that opens wide in welcome. And in the death of Christ, his followers saw a supreme expression of the longing of the very God for a closer bond with men. The Crucifixion was felt to typify the destruction of all that stood between heaven and earth ; for since God had borne in his own person the fullness of human sorrow to reveal his love, men could no longer feel him to be untouched by anything that affected human life. There is thus established an unflinching sympathy and understanding between the worshipper and the God he worships.

But religion shows this trait, curious but not unparalleled, that even within one of its strongly differentiated types the old contrasts reappear. Christianity is a pronounced expression of the faith that the Divinity, in act, in thought, in affection, in very nature, is near unto him who worships. Yet within a religion standing for this idea, the conflict which seemed to have ended breaks out afresh. On the one side were those who would remain true to the faith that the divine nature and the human are not of different mould but that the divine is the ideal and perfection of humanity. And against them were those who, while still Christians, felt the drawing of the opposite type of belief—that a divine life must of necessity be irreconcilable with man's, and that the divine nature can in no real way be united with the human.

The conflict had its intellectual expression in debates over the character of Jesus Christ, with arguments to show that he could not have been human, and arguments to show that he could not have been divine, and finally arguments to show that in him there was at once a real union of the human with the divine. Those for whom nothing is more abhorrent than the controversies of theology, have felt this to be mere dust and noise. But behind it is the vital question whether the human and the divine are of necessity different in kind, whether there is, after all, some impassable gulf between God and man, so that they can never really



meet, however great may be the desire for such a meeting. Those who denied the real union of humanity and divinity in Christ were, consciously or unconsciously, fighting for the principle of separation between the two orders of life ; they stood for the unchristian doctrine of a God afar off ; their position was, therefore, pronounced to be heresy, and the Church maintained the doctrine that in Christ Jesus there was a mysterious conjunction of very man and very God. It was a battle not of mere logic and metaphysics, for behind the subtle disputes were two very real and practical alternatives of religious life between which it was well that a choice should be made.

And yet, such is the mental insistence of the rejected belief, that in another respect even the main body of Christians have shown signs of compromise with an ideal not their own. Wherever we find insistence on personal *mediation* between God and man, it is a sign that the distance is felt to be too great for intercourse direct. It is difficult to avoid the impression of trespass here upon what is more properly of theology. But if it be permitted to speak from a psychological interest only, we might say that as an integral member of the Trinity the mediation of Christ between man and the Father perhaps provides for the desire within men, both to maintain and to annul the work of intercession. For the common idea of mediation, while in a sense preserved, is yet deeply altered, since now it is God himself in one of his own divine ' persons,' and not another, who bridges the chasm between divine and human. And yet in their common daily feeling the plain members of the Church have unmistakably yielded to the impulse to reaffirm the distance and the separation. If not in the decrees of councils, yet in the habitual ideas of many of the Church, ' the Father ' is regarded as the true God between whom and man a less awful and more lovable Being acts as mediator. The same motive, going to greater lengths, makes even Christ too exalted to be approached directly : between him and man there is need of an intercessor, the

Virgin Mother ; while the process, ever repeated, calls for patron saint and earthly priest, before communication between heaven and earth is re-established.

Mediation between man and the supreme God is not peculiar to Christian thought ; it springs from the very nature of the religious life in its higher if not its highest forms. And it is difficult to escape, even when the mind steadfastly resists the thought. Mohammed is like steel against all intercession ; God must stand alone, without sons or daughters or any ' associates,' and none may come between him and man. " Do they," who are not of Islam—perhaps the Christians especially are in mind—" Do they take besides God intercessors ? . . . God's is the intercession, all of it ; His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth." <sup>1</sup> Yet we are told " The angels celebrate the praises of their Lord, and ask forgiveness for those who are on the earth." <sup>2</sup> And even the Prophet himself does not receive the words of the Koran directly from Allah himself, but from the angel Gabriel by divine permission. <sup>3</sup>

And where the Arabic influence is present, though weakened, the thought of intercession, somewhat suppressed in Islam, may appear in fullest strength. In the Yoruba country in Africa, it is said that no man can directly approach God ; but the Almighty has appointed *oríṣas*, who are mediators, or intercessors, between himself and humanity—beings much like men, and pleased by offerings of sheep, pigeons, and other things, whereby they become conciliated and bless men through the power of God. <sup>4</sup> Vague suggestions, coming from instances of far-off men of power, reinforced by some inner sense of the uncontrolled and inscrutable might of nature—the sense of insufficiency before the mysteries of life—this supports and creates the belief that the Highest is reached only through others, and only through others gives his messages to men. " In the

<sup>1</sup> *Koran*, XXXIX (IX, 186).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XLII (IX, 205).

<sup>3</sup> Cf., e.g., *Ibid.*, II, (VI, 13).

<sup>4</sup> Bowen : " Yoruba Language," etc., *Introd.*, p. xvi, in *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, Vol. X, 1858.

beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals," says a recent Indian account ; " for Tirawa, the One Above, did not speak directly to man. He sent certain animals to tell men that he showed himself through the beasts, and that from them and from the stars and the sun and moon should man learn. . . . He never spoke to man himself, but gave his command to beast or bird, and this one came to some chosen man and taught him holy things."<sup>1</sup>

Somewhat softened in its mediation, but with a vein of feeling similar to this, the Homeric legends describe Zeus as communicating regularly, if not universally, with men through lower divinities, through divine messengers, like Hermes or Iris, or through no less living dream-forms. But it is in keeping with the Greek temper, not overburdened with a sense of human worthlessness, that to the Homeric Zeus man may pray direct without first appealing to some lesser god, indeed without even the mediation of a priest. In the Confucian religion, only the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, may perform sacrifices to Heaven and Earth.<sup>2</sup> So lofty a function, it would appear, was not befitting one of lower rank. Indeed, the priestly office, almost universal in religion, early came to be an expression of the need of an intermediary between man and the gods, the need of some special representative who possessed the secret knowledge, as of a magician, or who had the privilege or power of appearing before Heaven, as an advocate might come before a Judge, or a courtier plead in one's behalf before his King.

In the Rig-Veda this intermediation is at times more highly developed. There is here a special poet-priesthood who know the ceremonial, and who by gifts—often of princely worth<sup>3</sup>—can be induced to offer prayer and sacrifice. But the priest in his turn appeals at times only indirectly to the highest gods ; he approaches them only through

<sup>1</sup> *Indians' Book*, ed. Curtis, 1907, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Lî Kî*, VII, 2, 1 (XXVII, 373), and elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vedic Hymns, V, 27 (XLVI, 420).

another. Agni, the lowly, born on earth as well as in heaven, Agni, the homely yet heavenly god of fire, the friend and guest of all men, bears the sacrifice to the gods. To Agni is the prayer that he will intercede with Varuna, with the eldest god, the King who supports the tribes, that the anger of this god be no longer turned against men.<sup>1</sup> And as a final illustration of this widespread religious tendency, reference may be made to the prayer of the Assyrian King Assur-bani-pal, an impressive prayer for life, addressed to the god Nebo. This utterance from the dim past is more than a prayer simply; it is a dramatic dialogue, and contains the answer of the god. And it is clear that the prayer has not come to Nebo direct from Assur-bani-pal, but has been brought to the god by some intermediary. "Thy life," says Nebo to the King, "has been brought before me in supplication thus: His life do thou prolong, even the life of Assur-bani-pal!" Nebo thus speaks to the suppliant direct, though the King's prayer comes to Nebo through 'Urkittu.' And in the same strange dialogue, there is indicated a still farther step of mediation: "Fear not, Assur-bani-pal," says the god Nebo, "long life will I give unto thee:

"Fair winds from thy life will I appoint:

"My mouth speaking that which is good shall cause thy prayer to be heard in the assembly of the great gods."

Between Nebo and one so exalted as the monarch of a proud world-empire, there is an intermediary; but even the god Nebo is conceived also as an advocate who will carry the petition still higher even to the assembly of the great gods.<sup>2</sup>

The remoteness or nearness of the gods thus expressed by the presence or absence of mediation and in other ways, appears in still another form—in the relation of the highest god to the creation of the physical world. There is no

<sup>1</sup> *Vedic Hymns*, IV, 1 (XLVI, 307).

<sup>2</sup> Strong's tr. in *Records of the Past*, new series, VI, 104 ff. In the earlier translation by Oppert (in Ledrain's *Histoire d'Israel*, 1882, Pt. II, p. 486 f.) the mediatory feature, while far less clear, is not entirely absent.



necessity in logic that the object of religious worship should also be thought the cause of natural things ; but the impulse to explain is strong in man, and generally the chief divinities are regarded as the source or fashioners of nature and mankind. The images of the way in which the creative power works are varied and most interesting. The great god may work like a magician or enchanter, and changes be produced, no man can say how. Or the world or parts of it may come from some great spider, perhaps because the spider makes its web so craftily.<sup>1</sup> Or the world comes like the coming of young life—from an egg, or by living birth.<sup>2</sup> Again, the world or man may be fashioned as by a workman using materials he finds at hand : the creator is pictured as a fashioner of metals,<sup>3</sup> or a potter, or an artist chiselling in stone.<sup>4</sup> The God may call the world into its present form by the power of his commanding word.<sup>5</sup> Or the creative force may come from the glance of his eye, or from his heart or his hidden will or understanding.<sup>6</sup>

But when the divine life is overpoweringly felt to be apart, unimaginable, ineffable, then it seems sacrilegious to say that from such sublimity the things of this gross earth could directly spring. There must be some indirection, some middle term, between the great Original and this poor world with all its imperfections. Nature no longer comes immediately from God, but from a subordinate power, some 'archon,' or 'demiurge.' Thus for some of the mystics of the early Christian Church, the Creator in the Hebrew scriptures was such a subordinate being ; he came too close to the commonplace and evil facts of life to be identified with that Highest to whom no action, no qualities, no predicates—not even existence—could rightly be ascribed. In

<sup>1</sup> Stevenson : "The 'Sia," *Eleventh An. Rep. Bureau of Ethnol.*, 1894, pp. 26 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., Kalevala, Rune I.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Rune VII.

<sup>4</sup> Book of the Dead, Papyrus of Nesi-Khonsu (Budge, 646 ; and cf. note p. 150) ; Sayce : *Religs. of Anc. Egypt and Babylonia*, 1902, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis, I ; Maspero : *Dawn of Civilization*, tr. McClure, 1894, p. 147.

<sup>6</sup> Zend-Avesta, Gâthas, XXXI, 7 (XXXI, 44) ; Book of the Dead (Budge, 646).

the attempt to cover the measureless distance from such a height, there was developed a great system or series of effluxes by which the creative descent was made gradual from the Ultimate Source of all, down to the world of the things we see and touch.

These few illustrations may be sufficient to show that in the different forms of the doctrine of creation we find a differing sense of the nearness or remoteness of divinity. The distance and separation of God from common experience is expressed by his being less directly creative ; while the religious feeling that brings God near is inclined to attribute creation to him in his own proper person. But as in the case of the interest or indifference of heaven toward mankind no exclusive choice need be made, so here. An indecision between the opposing views is seen in the great classic of Vishnuism, where the feelings of nearness and of distance puzzlingly alternate : at one moment the divinity is declared to be identified with everything that is, and to be the sole activity in the universe ;<sup>1</sup> while at the next the worshipper, overcome by the feeling of God's sublimity, declares him to be the cause of nothing in this world. " The Lord is not the cause of actions, or of the capacity of performing actions amongst men, or of the connection of action and fruit. But nature only works. The Lord receives no one's sin, nor merit either."<sup>2</sup>

We thus find two opposing tendencies manifesting themselves in many ways—a tendency to keep the gods close to earth and mankind, close in interest and in intercourse, close in character, close in the sense that they are themselves the makers or fashioners of all material things ; and the contrasting tendency to keep the gods afar off—too far away to have created the earth, lacking interest in human affairs, incapable of being clearly known.

If we were to press forward, seeking an explanation of this group of oppositions, we should, in the first place,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 294 f., 297.

<sup>2</sup> Bhagavadgītā, V (VIII, 65).

see that the same kind of conflict is found in secular life. Wherever man feels that matters must be made as near perfection as possible, wherever there is an impulse to compare things with some absolute standard, and where common reality must thus in thought be placed beside an ideal reality—whether it be in the realm of philosophy or of politics or of art or of romantic love or of plain commercial dealing—in all such regions a contrast or conflict is apt to arise which in its spirit is like the one that we have just been viewing. A few illustrations will perhaps make this clearer.

In Plato the world of Ideas, which is the place of all perfection, is felt in two opposing ways. The Ideas or Ideals of earthly objects are often described as though utterly out of touch with the actual objects of which they are the perfection. The true philosopher studies death; for only death can free him from the presence of the forms of sense which pervert the mind and blind it to the clear outline of the ideal.<sup>1</sup> The real and the ideal are here hopelessly apart, and the ideal reality can be approached only by surrendering through death the things of life. But elsewhere we have an entirely different view. The ‘philosopher’—and he is to be the ruler of the perfect commonwealth—must actually bring the Ideal down to earth, and make it here a living fact.<sup>2</sup> Perfection and the world of sense are now no longer viewed as incompatible and fated to lie apart; an intercourse must be established, and the two made one.

But it is not alone in philosophy and in the theory of statecraft that such a contrast is found, so that ideal and fact are now intimate and now far disjoined. While practical politics has made prominent those who lack ideals, it has also brought into view those whose ideal world is out of touch with actual life, and who feel that—because of the very elevation of their standards—they are forced to stand aloof and take no part. One may have sympathy with those who feel no gift for political leadership, but hardly with

<sup>1</sup> *Phædo*, 65–68.

<sup>2</sup> *Republic*, Bk. VII, 514–20.

those for whom the actual condition is so far from ideal that they must only look on, pained and impotent. Fortunately, however, there are men of the opposite type—who value what is higher than anything yet realized, and who have some genius for seeing how the present things can be brought nearer what they value. For them the ideal does not keep afar from earth, lest its purity be sullied ; it touches common things at every point.

In art the worshippers of the far-off ideal are those who find beauty only in what is unlike all actual existence. They paint only 'ideal' faces, or mystical figures from legend or from allegory, confining themselves thus rigidly to stained-glass-window topics. With those of different temperament, who yet may truly be called idealists, beauty is discovered close to this present life, and they suggest in their work a perfected reality, where concrete fact and ideality may blend.

And if one might introduce into a cold discussion like this of ours a theme more fit for verse, there are different types of romantic love. Many a youth with eyes upon the ideal still finds enough of perfection in poor mortality to warrant him directing thither some warm affection. A few lovers, however—votaries of the far-off ideal—perceive all flesh and blood to lack so painfully the qualities they admire, that their affections remain ever detached and objectless, so far as concerns this world below the moon.

Finally, the same contrast might be pointed out even in the world of commerce—where those who, with fine sentiment and looking far away, fret futilely at the sordidness of trade, in which their lives are cast, stand sharp against others who, feeling no less the imperfection and the perfect, bring the two into active intercourse. But probably we have had more than enough of such analogues of what is in the centre of our interest. Yet we ought to feel that here is something more than mere analogy. Unless there has been some error, we really have been observing but varied instances of the self-same mental fact, though



mingled in each case with a different alloy and used in a different setting.

As for the *causes* of the special contrasts in depicting the character of the religious ideal and its relation to material and mortal things, the first thought might be that the different forms in which the divine life appears are due to the different patterns with which people are familiar, and especially to the different patterns of government. When considering the contrast between polytheism and monotheism such political models were found to be of influence; and heaven in many ways appeared as at once an imitation and an idealization of earth. So it might seem that the God felt to be close to man was, perhaps, but a projection upon the heavens of the earthly ruler who is near—the patriarch meeting his people face to face, and hedged about with no courtiers and ceremony. And, according to this view, the far-off God would be an imitation of those forms of polity where the monarch is so exalted as to have no intercourse with his subjects, and to be for them distant and mysterious.

Some evidence could be adduced for such a theory.<sup>1</sup> The remote, indifferent God is often found in communities where despotism has emphasized in many ways the distance between the monarch and the people. The belief of the Yorubas (described but a few pages before) that God is to be approached only through supernatural intercessors, through *oriṣas*, who must first be conciliated by offerings of sheep or pigeons or the like, is exactly analogous to the usage in secular government of this same people. Petitioners approach the king only through his servants, courtiers, and nobles, who receive “good words and presents” for their work of intercession.<sup>2</sup> So, too, the numerous and impassable castes which lie between subject and ruler in India may have had something to do with the development there of the

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Ames: *Psychology of Religious Experience*, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Bowen: “Yoruba Language,” etc., Introd., p. xvi, in *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowl.*, Vol. X, 1858.

religious idea of the Distant, the Unspeakable. In Greece, on the other hand, where caste had no such place and where men rose readily to leadership and returned again to a subject's rank, the gods mingle in the affairs of men. The political situation here may have influenced the religious thought. Yet it is also possible that with the Greek and Barbarian both the political and the religious sympathies came from some common source. Indeed, it is easy to overvalue (as to undervalue) the influence of external patterns.

When we look over the field as a whole, there is much to show that the forces forming such religious ideas work more subtly than do outward political forms. The Persians, among whom there was quite as ample opportunity as with the people of India for copying in religion the traits of haughty rulers, inclined much less than the Hindus to represent the gods as indescribably exalted. So, too, the Christian emphasis on a God become man, on a God who humbled himself that man might be lifted up, was hardly copied from the lives of contemporary rulers; if such examples had influence at all, it was as negative examples, showing what to avoid. Moreover, the mystical elevation of divinity until all human predicates are left below, going ever higher and higher until the definite reality disappears in an emotional haze—this idea has recurred in communities where also the opposite religious conception holds its ground. The mystic Lâo-tze, for whom the Highest was to be called the Form of the Formless, the Fleeting, and the Indeterminable, was of the same country as Confucius, for whom the objects of worship, it must be confessed, were hardly warm of blood, yet as nature-deities and ancestors of the family and the state they were not quite beyond all human thought and interest. And in Alexandria, the extreme expression of the religious view that God is different from all that we can see or think, developed under social and political conditions that certainly were not diametrically opposed to those which saw the birth of Christianity.

The character of the religious ideal, then, in the particulars which we have just been studying, is not fixed by political forms, though it may be influenced by them. There seems to be at work something more secret, more internal—found, I believe, in half-hidden memories, without feeling ; in peculiar adjustments of pleasure and pain ; but, most of all, in differences of desire, according to which some men are controlled by interest in their fellows, while others are dominated by one of several interests where sympathy plays no part. But this is merely to name the causes, without seeing them. Actually to observe them and at work, one must look into the deep nature of that act by which we idealize.

In a measure the present part of our study has, perhaps, helped us to such an end. Some glimpse has been caught of the means by which we depict the divine—of the various media which the mind uses in its representation of the ideal ; a glimpse, too, of the contrasts within the character of the divine. Thus the process by which we form our ideal has in part been long before us, but now calls for another mode of study. As we go further any partial interest becomes more difficult, until it is idle longer to attempt attention first and foremost to the work of intellect or of any other special power. It were better now to look to the interplay of energies that primarily and exclusively are neither of knowledge nor of emotion nor of action and the will, but possess a full rounded life, of which these special terms represent but the separate sections. It should then be easier to see religion with some semblance of entirety and in truer connection with the rest of human effort. Yet we need not wholly lose interest in some of the problems already encountered, but may glance back at them from a different point, and enlarge our acquaintance even with what we have left behind.





PART IV  
CENTRAL FORCES OF RELIGION



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE IDEALIZING ACT

IT is a mark of human nature—though the same trait appears in life still lower—to transform its neighbourhood. Often, and indeed usually, this is done without deliberate intent, there being an unconscious betrayal of wants and purposes that will not quite permit a passive and satisfied acceptance of what is found at hand. Constructed dwellings, clothing patched together or woven, utensils and tools and weapons, the planting and garnering of grain—all these give evidence that nature's direct provision does not satisfy, but must be eked out by art or artifice to allay some mild discontent. And these crude endeavours to supplement nature's rich parsimony are doubtless idealization in its infant or perhaps prenatal state.

The impulse to mould the facts until they more nearly conform to some inner rule and standard—to supplement them, if need be, by direct addition—appears in many different forms between idealization's infancy and its maturer years. The adornment which so many primitive utensils and weapons undergo shows a continuance of man's physical meddling with what is given: even his own products, made to satisfy his physical needs, must be further modified to suit his pleasures. And in the simple act of sight or hearing or touch we always perceive more than our sense-impressions warrant. Human speech and laughter are, in their bare reality, a mere spatter of sound which we, in hearing, instantly amplify until there seems to emerge

from them the speaker's full meaning and mood. The field of view, with its different distances and solidities—house-tops, chimneys, trees, spires and towers—whose entire reality and connections vision seems directly to present, is but a clever wash of bright and dark, of green, yellow, red, and blue, inwardly enveloped in muscular strain and orbital friction and pressure. The direct sensations here coming from the visual organ are to an almost incredible extent supplemented and transmuted by the inner powers which greet the influx. And this so fundamental enrichment of the given fact is carried still further when causes are imagined for the events that are perceived, or where memory brings back absent fact. The whole panorama of the past, whose reality seems so unquestionable, is not sensibly assured to us, but is a skilful piece of mental architecture to round out the fragmentary present.

In countless ways, while believing that the tumbled ruins of fact are merely being 'restored,' we refurbish and enlarge, according to ideas of completeness for which the facts themselves furnish but distant hints.

The completion of the observed world by adding to it that great unobserved world so real to the religious, is therefore no anomaly. It is the most impressive, but by no means the only, evidence of that large dissatisfaction with what is given, which is found in every region and course of human character. The instinct to remodel the given fact to our own satisfaction—at first to meet physical needs, but soon to meet the no less urgent need of beauty and justice and intelligibility—by this wide instinct all are moved. So far as it works in the religious region, its character has been before us throughout this essay. But here toward the close a more particular and summary account should be attempted, of the different ideas and desires which direct the formation of the religious ideal. The account intended will prove to be little more than a dry list of several of the impulses which influence the form the ideal assumes before the mind's eye.



The ideal is the picture of what will satisfy in fullest measure our desires. Sensuous pleasures are often a permanent feature in the ideal ; as when the Arabian Paradise, besides fellowship and the reunited family, has plentiful flowing water and cool shade and fruits and large-eyed maids. The ideal in its simpler form is, then, the image and promise of sensuous delights.

But the features in the ideal which reflect these more primitive and receptive instincts habitually find themselves made relatively less important because of a somewhat rival love of Action and of Power. The great changes in the physical world—raging fires, storms, earthquakes—have an astonishing fascination. And nearly as great as this strange satisfaction in beholding destructive power, is the pleasure in producing change ourselves—in *doing*, irrespective of the character of the deed. And therefore power—at first mainly physical, but soon including what is psychic, as men respect more and more the secret influence of words and will and thought—enters prominently into the image of the Best. God is felt to be the one who is powerful beyond all human strength :

“ By the breath of God ice is given :  
And the breadth of the waters is congealed.  
Yea, he ladeth the thick cloud with moisture ;  
He spreadeth abroad the cloud of his lightning :  
And it is turned round about by his guidance,  
That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them  
Upon the face of the habitable world.” <sup>1</sup>

Largely that the Ideal may be the utter completion of power, God is often, but not always, made to be the fashioner or creator of the world. God it is who hath laid the foundations of the earth, and shut the sea with doors ; he hath commanded the morning, and caused the dayspring to know its place.<sup>2</sup>

But herein an entirely different motive reinforces the love of power. The mature and civilized man, the savage, the

<sup>1</sup> Job, XXXVII, 10-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, 4-12.

child, even the higher of the beasts—all these are attentive to upheaval or devastation ; but more than this, they are possessed of curiosity, since, even in minor changes, they discern with satisfaction the operating cause. This curiosity, schooled and made methodical, works not only in science, but in religion ; and that the Unseen, the Ideal, should be conceived as Creator springs largely from this passion to explain.

If one may pay no heed to the order of history, but catalogue by a different rule the desires that have to do with the Ideal, there might next be named the gratification felt by man, when once he has become familiar with the instruments of his own thought, in bringing to completion the processes of argument and proof. Such a satisfaction is neighbour to the love of causal explanation already named; but with this difference, that the missing term whose discovery is hailed with joy is not some event or coercive power such as the causal instinct seeks, but is a more subtle reality to which others look as their completing idea or sufficient reason. All subordinate ideas and conclusions imply, as their justification, a higher truth, an ulterior premiss. And therefore the Ideal, which is to be the sum of all perfections, not only must be the unlimited Power, the unmatched creative Energy, but must answer to that Conception which requires no other for its support, which gives in itself its own ample justification. But the desire for such logical completeness is not easy to satisfy when dialectic interest has once been sharpened. For it is extremely difficult to construct a thought that implies nothing beyond itself. Our common ideas all live surrounded by other ideas, and serve as foils to one another, giving outline or definition each to what adjoins it—the masculine becoming of definite meaning because set over against the feminine, and both of these against the brutal. But with the Ideal in its self-perfection there appears this difficulty, that if we make it full of positive qualities, like goodness, strength, and knowledge, there seems to hover about it a cloud of

opposing and negative qualities—evil, weakness, ignorance. And these, being outside the divine, make it appear to be limited by them and therefore short of infinite. If, however, these and all other negative qualities are boldly included in the being of the Ideal until this embraces all that can be thought ; then in satisfying logic, offence is given to morals and to the sense of heroism ; and the image of the all-inclusive God becomes ungodlike by revealing internal conflict and confusion.

There is thus a contradiction in the assertions to which these different interests lead. The purely logical search for the Infinite ends in the thought that all must be included ; the moral search for the Infinite, or Highest, ends in the thought that much must be debarred. For in the moral ideal there is implied sympathy and help ; there are recognized, not only by man, but also by the divinity, the need of companionship and of wide stretches of reality beyond the self. The forces of life do not work from a single centre, but are resident here and there ; action and reaction occur ; real work of assistance is performed.

The acceptance of this form of Ideal seems to mean, in a sense, the surrender of infinity. Yet more truly it is the surrender of a poorer for a richer and less formal infinity—an infinity in which less stress is laid on quantity, or all-inclusiveness, and more on quality, that it shall be of unsurpassed, indeed unsurpassable, kind and worth. The logical power, all eager to climb the *scala divisionis* to the topmost round, has been forced to heed the suggestions of our social nature. It is, of course, the intellect still that formulates the outcome of such compromise ; that states the new form under which Perfection, or Infinity, appears. Yet this intellectual statement is far different from what it would have been had the intellect disregarded our social needs. Such an accommodation, however, is not without precedent. In giving detail to the thought of Perfection, our sensuous desires have, by common agreement, been prevented from pressing their claims beyond a certain point.

They can only be granted so much voice in determining the character of the Best as does not make this seem short of Best when estimated by our other interests. And each of these other interests and powers must in like manner recognize the limits imposed by comity. We do not seek what will appear Best to some special part of us, but best to our nature as a whole.

Yet another part of this nature of ours complicates the effort to form a satisfying idea of perfection. Although eating and drinking and gratifications belonging to their order are, in the end, made subordinate in the Ideal, there is an interest of ours beginning on the sensuous plane, which rightly exerts an influence all along—the sense of beauty. The art impulse is present even to primitive men and to children, and makes its power felt, not only in some slight but gratifying change in useful things, but in the small and large formalities of conduct, and in the rhythm and tone of dance with music and recitation. Especially in the great sagas, the gods, in look and words and dramatic action, are formed to answer to this love of sound and colour, and of strong sinew and muscle. The worship of sun and stars, of storm and lightning, is not entirely due to their direct physical importance for men. The Vedas, like the Book of Job, express the beauty of the outer world. And while the frequent tragic element in myth, where the power that has men's sympathy suffers defeat, may have had its origin in utilitarian rites or in the direct suggestion of nature, as some insist, yet this tragic element outlasts such origin and retains its hold on men's conception of the Divine, to some extent because of its pure dramatic force.

The sympathy and personal disappointment which enter into the tragedy of the Ideal bring one to a whole group of influences of a more clearly social stamp than are most of those so far considered. And here an important place belongs to family interest. Since the family bond is vital in human affairs, and the son submits to his father's will and avenges his father's wrongs, or inherits wealth and station



through his mother, and seeks in many ways to protect and aggrandize those of his own blood, it is natural that the conception of the Best should be intimate with this dominating interest. Ancestor worship, in its wide extent from Maryland to China, connects the ideal with the importance of the family. Guided by the gratification and desire connected with the greatness of the line, the sires of the family or tribe, together with its present living members, are regarded as the object of supreme importance.

The ideal is not always brought to perfect system ; and even where ancestor worship exists, other social bonds may be recognized in varying degrees of faintness or of strength. There are gods recognized who exceed the family limit, having an interest in men of other blood. Here the force of common humanity is at work, and the interest in a union on a world-wide scale. The recognition of the claims of manhood, apart from any special ties of clan or nation or language or colour, makes its slow way, urging and urged on by the sense of the common fatherhood of God.

In addition to the immediate feeling of the ties which hold together great masses of men, our picture of Perfection is strongly influenced by the machinery needed to maintain any great human union. The officials of earthly organizations—the judge, the general, the priest, the king—loom large in human eyes ; and the gods come to be, in the spiritual realm, the still further enlargement of these august types. The impression received from all such officers is unconsciously expected even from the Ideal, and so we find these great titles, and the great functions which go with title and office, imaginatively augmented and carried into the very heavens.

Finally, among the desires and satisfactions which mould the image of the Best, a place should fall to human friendliness—a motive having much in common with other social impulses, but also sufficiently distinct. Companionship of one man with another comes in time to be prized as a good

that is additional to whatever comes through the family ; independent also of the great governmental ties, the relation of subject and ruler. The connection between brothers is, perhaps, the nearest approach to it in the family life, and yet even this is less free, less elective, than that of friends. So friendship comes to be distinguished and to receive peculiar warmth of praise—as in the story of David and Jonathan, of Damon and Pythias, and many more. And as men would enjoy friendship in very perfection, the religious Ideal comes gradually to be seen as the fulfilment of this desire, and the divinity is felt to be closer than a brother, as the Friend of friends. The restraint even of the paternal bond here has vanished, and only its sympathy and fine stir remain. Friendship may be regarded almost as an institution beside those of the family and the state, and coming in late days to influence the ideal as truly as do they.

Thus the cravings and appreciations by which the image of the Perfect receives form, include sensuous pleasure and the love of action, together with the curiosity for causes, the need of logical sufficiency, the delight in beauty, the sense of the importance of the family, of larger human unions and the lordship and magistracy which accompany these, and finally of the golden gifts of friendship. This catalogue of idealizing forces is certainly imperfect, and a further scrutiny would easily enlarge it ; but it will at least distantly indicate the rich variety of energies which are here at work. But it is not to be thought that these are active all the while, or in like degree in all persons. And since with different groups of men the ideal is formed under the persuasion of these desires in varying combination, the list helps us the better to understand the contrast among men in regard to the place and nature of their worshipped objects.

Especially does the different constitution of the idealizing act help us to see more clearly the movements which affect

the distance and the sharpness of outline of Divinity. Minds whose guiding motive is the appreciation of creative power or generation, are almost of necessity induced to locate the most important of such operations—and consequently the focal interest and effective worth of the Being from which they spring—in a distant past. Moreover, in a Being who displays chiefly this great cosmological activity, there is little to stir sympathy or the sense of a close personal tie. And, likewise, minds that are dominated by a desire for logical sufficiency—where the religious object is refined and attenuated by all the critical instruments of an intellect impatient of fixed limits to its sweep—such minds usually attain their self-sufficient Reason, if at all, only by a long and perilous ascent which makes it seem inevitably remote, wanting in contour, aloof from all our character and concerns. Those, too, whose idealizing effort is guided mainly by the æsthetic sense may easily be satisfied with an image of perfection wherein responsiveness to us is regarded as unessential. Just as the intellect is capable of crossing the gulf which lies between us and objects or ideas that are most unlike ourselves—abstractions, negative entities, puzzling or impossible essences, where a feeling of fellowship with us need play no part—so the feeling for beauty often leads to a satisfaction in what is vague and far removed from us in place and native bent. Quite apart from any lurking personification, men find a delicate pleasure in the forms of plants and shells, of waves and clouds, in the extent of the sky by day or in the immensities of the vaulted stars. Some receive almost an intoxication in contemplating the endless spaces between or beyond the heavenly bodies, or the unimaginable remoteness of geologic time. That such objects often are of no practical importance, and are devoid of consciousness and cannot respond to man's interest—this does not chill the pleasure, but may augment it. And since there is a like freedom in gratifying the more vegetative and animal desires or causal curiosity, as well as in appreciating mere power or dialectic completeness or

æsthetic stir—since in all these the object, to be satisfying, need not be like us or with interest in us, the religious Ideal that takes form from any part or from the whole of this wide range of influences may easily remain at the farthest pole from ready and sympathetic intercourse with men, and even from definiteness and intelligibility.

But where the religious ideal comes to life under the warm influence of those appreciations which are more social, the Perfect is far more apt to meet our sympathetic needs. Satisfaction in the family or tribe or state, or in their eminent personages, or in the less fixed and rigid ties of human intercourse, tends to make men see the object of adoration as of a nature essentially like ours—having interest and quick preference, love and hate, holding the rewards of good and evil. And after this broad modelling, other influences can then act, introducing elements of power and beauty and logical harmony, without quite undoing the work already done. God conceived under inducements of social feeling is, from the beginning, close to men, is attentive, even if not at first friendly; and the conception grows with human growth, and often faster than this, until God is felt to be the great resource, the supreme encouragement to man to ennoble all his living. In retaining this intimacy, the Divine is not only at hand and favouring, but is definite and knowable. The God near to man, and the God of definite and knowable character, are thus the connected expression of this motive of sympathy.

The account of the inner forces which wonderfully diversify men's anticipation of the Perfect would be far more incomplete than it must needs be, if certain further facts were left unnoticed. The thought of God as afar may occur not only in idealization guided by the relatively unsocial desires, but also as a result of memory or habit retaining the great figures of a creed that has for some reason lost its hold on interest and feeling, without being entirely discarded from the mind. The gods of a people who once possessed



the land often take this cool intellectual place in the faith of the invader. The gods of the conquered are conceived as subject to the incoming gods, and their rites live on among some of the population ; but with the people as a whole, or in the religion of the dominant life, they appear like beached and bleached wrecks of a once active faith.

And a certain difference in human constitution is also important here. Most of us are keyed to receive pleasure oftener than pain. For since pleasure is the normal feeling connected with beneficent influences, with increase of vitality, with all appropriate activity of body and of mind ; while pain comes normally with injury, with restricted action, with sapping of strength—since this is so, it is inevitable that any race that is to live and grow and dominate a part of earth must be affected more frequently or more profoundly by the forces that further life and so give pleasure, than by those that retard life and bring pain. We might, therefore, expect to find men accustomed to receive pleasure from their actual surroundings, even when they can see that their situation is far from perfect. And in spite of the raven-philosophers, the facts seem to come forth to satisfy this expectation. There is in the plain man usually a sound appreciation of the good of his lot : his children are better than others', he has his own house and likes it, the town where he lives is more attractive than the neighbouring places, and his country is the greatest upon earth. His minor grumblings simply indicate a discriminating mind, giving point and weight to his large approvals.

But there are exceptional persons, and even large groups of persons, in whom this normally pleasurable reaction somehow fails. The dominant note with them is depression, is pain. We need not have in mind those who are subject to external want or to persistent physical suffering ; for sufferers often are among the buoyant. But for no assignable outer cause or reason, some find everything about them disappointing. When these form their ideal, they inevitably are influenced by the pain that flows in upon them

from every side ; and the world of thought or of the imagination, in which they take their refuge, is constructed by antithesis to what appears in actual life. The world of the Perfect with them is as unlike the actual as can be conceived. And what is radically unlike all that we experience must of necessity tend toward the unimaginable, the incommunicable, what is vague, negative, characterless, and with no strong interest in this world nor influence upon it. Thus the object chosen for the reverence of such persons is apt to be an expression of their underlying disappointment, of a disillusion coming from mood or temperament rather than from force of candid evidence. It may pass into full pessimism, and then nothing in all this life—neither in themselves nor in others nor in the outlying world—can enter into the Ideal, which becomes an escape from existence, and the person “ passes finally away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain.”<sup>1</sup>

Men of the other type of character, more gratified than distressed by things existent, feel no such impulse to keep all that is actual away from the Ideal. The life they live holds for them too much good to be utterly cast aside ; it has much that can be carried over almost unchanged into the picture of the perfect. And so, for them, the Ideal is less remote, less alien to the actual life. The two worlds have common elements and a common plan, and free communication between them seems natural and necessary. The near divinity is thus the normal religious object of those for whom pain is outweighed by pleasure—not pleasure momentary or by expensive stimulation, but of nature and of habit. That the Ideal seems close to such men is in keeping with their hopefulness—a hope which need not be blind to defect nor unacquainted with suffering. In this insufficient way we might indicate how vitally important for our thought of God’s inner character and of his relation to the world is the nature of our usual response to

<sup>1</sup> Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, IV, 50 ; cf. III, 20, V, 20, etc. (XI, 81, 48, 90).


what life offers—whether pleasure or pain with us is uppermost.

The attention just given to the idealizing process will perhaps weaken the temptation to say that religion flows entirely from the social nature of man—from his dissatisfaction with actual society, and a craving for its perfection. Like all the great activities—poetry, painting, scientific study, the growth of forms of government—religion makes use of different minds and of the contributed gains of generations ; and therefore is a social, a co-operative measure ; but not distinctively so. As we have just seen, the form in which the Best appears to men's eyes, while influenced by a whole group of social impulses—the impulses that give reality and importance to country, to kith and kin, and to friends—yet is also profoundly affected by motives connected with high curiosity, with the desire to see the cause of change, and with the interest in change itself, apart from its cause or any practical result. It would seem as much a forcing of facts to attribute such primitive impulses to the social consciousness or to social claims or social imitation as it would be to explain in any such way our sense of colour and sound, or the native dislike of cold and spiders, or the enjoyment of food. The reverence which men have shown the Highest has usually been, not alone because it fulfilled their social needs, but also because of its satisfaction to sensuous and æsthetic and causal and logical needs, which grow, it is true, by the mutual friction and support of men, but seem not to originate in this way nor to be part and parcel of the social feeling itself.

Yet in those high religions that are not atheistic the social feelings are probably the dominant ones ; and even in the religion of some Buddhists that *is* atheism, there is, perhaps, this connection with social impulse, that the denial of a personal Ideal may possibly be found to spring from a one-sided overstraining and exhaustion of these moral instincts themselves. The very intemperance of the desire for an

absolutely perfect social union has possibly worked to undermine an appreciation of the plain realities of life, of which so large a part are under personal form. The statement that religion finds its mental origin and characteristic in social features and social instincts is, then, largely true. But there is in religion so much that is not of the nature of social response, and there are so many forms of social response that are not religious, that much wearisome taking-in and letting-out of this verbal garment are needed before it can exactly fit the body of the facts.

The truer statement seems to be that since the idea of the Best is moulded by so many psychic activities—by pain and pleasure derived from people and from things, and caused by the manifold desires connected with every function of mind and body—it is idle to speak of any particular human activity as the sole source even of idealization, much less of that still greater breadth of response which enters into religion as a whole. To reverence, nothing is foreign that is of man. For even where the human is rejected from the Ideal, the whole human character stands at the back of this rejection, including it and giving it occasion and form.





## CHAPTER XXIV

### CHANGE AND PERMANENCE IN THE IDEAL

THE stability of religion is almost concealed in its incessant movement. Neither the divine honours themselves, nor they who pay the honours, nor those to whom they are paid, seem to display much but inconstancy. These changes, moreover, are often in the inner spirit rather than in the outward appearance, and may be deep and revolutionary. The ceremonies connected with personal crises—with birth and maturity and death—which in early times are little more than crude devices to protect from impending malice and harm, change into noble expressions of the hope and need of divine care when life feebly enters and finds its strength and passes out. The priest, once close in office to the sorcerer and magician, ceases in time to be a mere performer of occult rites and becomes a prophet and representative of divine nobility, giving by his own character and perception and intercourse with the best from past and future a fresh impression of the nature and purpose of Godhood. Impossible as it seems, the mumbling medicine-man is the far-off precursor of St. Francis and Savonarola, of Wesley and Luther. And the same change goes on in other parts. Sacrifice, which at first is intended to satisfy the animal needs of the worshipped, and later gratifies them rather by the mere pleasures of taste and smell, becomes finally a symbolic utterance to God of submission and faithful reverence. Physical offerings that once were thought to have virtue in them-

selves give place to the more acceptable sacrifice of a humbled and contrite spirit. And the shedding of blood, by some believed to be needed to satisfy the technical demands of justice if not the craving for animal food, is later felt to bring spiritual healing only by its power to teach, by its exhibition of the cruelty hidden in narrow piety, by its example of heroic fidelity to truth.

The race and the person are for ever outgrowing the earlier reverence, while yet remaining reverent. Or if the old usage is preserved, it is forced to express an altered meaning. The new that comes must still listen to the old ; and the old, in the shift of thought and people, cannot remain entirely as it was. Thus the growth is unmistakable, and yet is not without some unconscious recollection of what has gone before—like the identity of a man with his own childish self. If a fact so well known need be exemplified, Perunŭ, the old god of thunder with the Russians, is still venerated by the peasants, it is said, under the form of Elijah ;<sup>1</sup> the Chaldean account of the flood passes over to the Israelite, taking on, in the transition, a more moral tone ; and in the Northern myths, tales like that of the Virgin Mary and of the Baptist and of the infant Moses seem to be confusedly echoed in a form that shows the influence of another mental world : The Virgin Mariatta is quickened of a mountain-berry, and to her a child is born in the manger of the fire-horse Hisi—a babe that vanishes, and later is found in the reeds and rushes of the Fenland ; and as the child grows, the old magician-minstrel Wainamoinen sees in his coming the wane of the older minstrelsy, and sings farewell to Northland.<sup>2</sup> The innovator Mohammed takes the great shrine—the Kaabah—at Mecca, where devotion to the old tribal gods had been paid from the dimmest past ; and clearing it of idols, as many as the days of the year, dedicates it to the service of the chief of the old gods, Allah. He uses, too, for the new faith the

<sup>1</sup> Leger : *La mythologie slave*, 1901, pp. 66 ff., 76.

<sup>2</sup> Kalevala, Rune L (Crawford, 717 ff.).

long-established Pilgrimage, and the visitation to Mount Zafâ and Mount Marwâ, before sacred to other gods.<sup>1</sup> And still in modern times the old yields to the new, but in yielding transforms what takes its place. Uchimura is about to leave Japan for the Western world, both he and his father having become converted to Christianity: "After my father's heart-rending prayers for the watchful care of Providence over his son," we are told, "he took me to the ancestral shrine which we still kept, and there bade me to address myself to the soul of my departed grandfather before I would cross the threshold of my house on this hazardous voyage. . . . I bowed my head, and my soul, directed alike to my Heavenly Father and to the departed spirits of my ancestors, engaged in a sort of meditation at once a prayer and a retrospection."<sup>2</sup>

It would be needless to illustrate afresh the endless variety of objects that have been worshipped, and the impossibility of discovering in them the permanent and essential quality of religion. But it would seem no less difficult to find its permanent and essential nature in the feeling with which these objects are regarded. For at one time timid self-concern is prominent, and again there is easy confidence. The deterrent, the formidable or mysterious appearance of the unseen world, may stir some, while for others the Divine seems beckoning and intelligible and fit for friendship. The essence of religious feeling, then, is neither in sympathy nor in antipathy exclusively, nor in both of these commingled; for often there is little or nothing but a quiet practical submission or perhaps an attempt at mastery over the gods, that seems to belong to some different dimension of our life.

Accordingly the truth is missed when some special feeling is believed to be religion's characteristic mark. Religion is

<sup>1</sup> See Palmer's *Introd. to Qur'ân*, p. xiii, and various passages in the Koran itself. Sir Richard Burton's *Pilgrimage* is, of course, the classic description in English.

<sup>2</sup> *Diary* [1895], p. 99.

not identical with adoration, as some declare ; for spirits and gods may receive, instead of adoration, trickery and chastisement from their worshippers. Nor does it seem at all times to be a 'solemn reaction,' as has been held ; for light rejoicing may appear in worship. Nor is it certain that the heart of religion is disclosed by calling it "awe at the mysterious and unknown." Often it is such awe ; and yet again the sense of mystery is almost if not wholly wanting, and with full devotion there is a sense of security and understanding entirely absent from the intercourse with visible persons and things. Finally, the common trait of faith cannot assuredly be found in the feeling of dependence. It is true that a sense of dependence is frequent in the religious life, as it is in the secular. All attachment to what is without, all high value set upon something not ourselves, means the giving of *hostages*. Whatever a man loves he commits his happiness to, in degree according to the depth of his affection. Those who withdraw within themselves—like the old poet who sings, "My mind to me a kingdom is"—praise the serenity and independence of their state. Some faiths, like Buddhism, are ever gospels of *independence*, of self-sanctification ; and although, for the time, man is in the toils of the outer world and of causal law, this upon which he transitorily depends is the very fact toward which he is taught in such a faith to feel no reverence whatsoever. Other religions have escaped the sense of dependence in still another way. Instead of man's fortune being at the mercy of those he worships, these draw from him their very sustenance. The sacrifice is thought to maintain the divine strength and power. Similarly ancestors must have their due homage from the living members of the family from generous regard for the departed, lest, unsupported, the dead fall down to hell. Thus dependence appears where no religion is, and departs without taking homage with it, and cannot well be religion's unfailing sign. And there seems little hope of discovering any other feeling that always will be present.



If in the face of facts so obdurate, an attempt should still be made, one might say that religion is the appreciation of an unseen world, usually an unseen company; and religion is also whatever seems clearly to be moving toward such an appreciation or to be returning from it. Or, perhaps, it might better be described as man's whole bearing toward what seems to him the Best, or Greatest—where 'best' is used in a sense neither in nor out of morality, and 'greatest' is confined to no particular region.

In any such attempt at definition, there is a certain shameless disregard of the border where religion fades into magic or into political respect or common social bonds; and while this takes from the appearance of the definition, it may help its truth; for the description should not be much sharper than the facts. For it is a fact that religion stands on common ground with much that is secular—with loyalty of all kinds, friendship, regard for whatever is delightful, intellectual search into things unknown—on common ground even with appreciation that is not of love alone, but of aversion; having in it recoil and hatred, as of what is ugly or menacing. No clear line marks the transition from religion to other human activities. Not simply does worship fade insensibly into common life; it overlaps it, and there are large spaces that clearly belong to both. The feelings of the patriot, the artist, the man of science even, are not precisely described as on the border of religion; rather they are in part identical with the feelings of the devout, although directed toward objects that differ from those of religion. But since the object around which the feeling plays is important and colours the feeling itself, the total activity called zeal for science or devotion to an art is not strictly religion, although having a religious ingredient—as sea and sky are different, although much is common to both.

In so far, then, as any interest or activity has features that are also discernible in man's response to the apparent Best, or in his appreciation of an unseen personal world,

this interest or activity overlaps religion. And this will help one—if not to answer, at least not to be dismayed by—those endless queries as to where, in early life, the name of religion can truly be applied. In magic, for example, some premonition of faith is present; there is belief in some unseen connection between events (as, indeed, in much of our modern science), and there is confidence that by right procedure their course can be controlled. But the unseen connection is here not necessarily viewed as a connection between conscious or personal beings, and the magician's own attitude fails to suggest a relation to other persons. The prime constituents of religion are here too diluted, if traceable at all, to justify the use of its name for such practices.

Fully as early as the appearance of magic, however, man appreciates a conscious or personal world. He feels the ties of family and of clan, he fears and fights both men and beasts—for these, too, are broadly persons. And all of this has much in common with early religion; indeed, it would be both right and wrong to say that here already was its distant form. Still distant, too, although closer to typical religion as regards the character of its objects, if not as regards the feelings with which these are greeted, is that attitude of man toward beings as though they were conscious, when, according to our later science, no consciousness there resides—stocks and stones, fountains and rivers, wind and lightning, moon and sun. Although the objects here appreciated are still seen, yet there is infused into their visible character a hidden and conscious potency, by a process which differs from that by which we believe in the consciousness of our fellow-men, simply in that our infusion of thought into these lifeless things seems to later reason so unwarranted. To this intercourse with inanimate things the term 'religion' might be applied with more truth than error. And when, by all those strengthening influences that give reality to a realm of spirits set free from the hard facts of sense, there comes distinct and im-

portant before us a society other than our normal visible one, then religion has appeared unmistakably. A complementary world of conscious beings now gives a separate focus and fresh strength to those activities of appreciation that run all through our secular life.

If this bare outline is at all correct, religion is the gradual awakening to the weight and import of a peculiar order of objects. The sense of value, of significance, has found a new medium, a new direction. For a time this new world which religion has discovered repeats, for the most part, the broad features of familiar human life. But soon in picturing the invisible world the colours of experience begin to be applied with greater freedom. The mottled forms of the spirit-realm show human traits exaggerated, and become in many ways more impressive than mere men—in appearance, in swiftness, in kindly or malevolent power. Where every one that is outside the clan is presumably hostile, and war so largely fills the mind, it is hardly surprising that idealization tutored in such a school should so often present the stranger-spirit in the form of idealized ill-will, of malice become heroic. The Ideal is what possesses deepest significance, supreme in its mastery over all our powers. And in selecting and perfecting the elements to enter into the mental picture of the ideal, it is perhaps only natural that the savage should often turn toward the grotesque, the horrible, the devouring. For these unquestionably are in many ways commanding, they stir to life the feeling of importance, even though it be sinister; and, lifting men out of the dull commonplace of petty planning, become distant and preparatory images of the Ideal.

It is, perhaps, no less natural that man should also be early impressed by goodwill, and should often permit this, rather than malevolence, to rule his feeble powers of idealization. For even savages imaginatively enlarge the outline of human character into heroic proportions also on this kindlier side. There are for them spirits and divinities who

do no harm, but only good. Very early, then, is seen some half-waking sense of the importance of goodwill as well as enmity ; and as man's appreciation becomes elevated and his aim more surely fixed upon a peaceful and intelligent life, this steadying love of what is civil has its effect upon the image of the spirit-world and gives this an attempted perfection in law and quiet dominion and understanding. The gods possess all for which man longs—vigour and happy enterprise and wisdom. In this is reached the flawless completion not only of the outward character of man—his knitted strength and movement—but of his whole inner nature, seen in firm, kindly purpose and intelligence.

But the higher our own attainment, the less are we satisfied to represent the Best by something closely like ourselves. What can suffice to be the figure of perfection becomes with advance less entirely intimate with life. As it is purified and exalted the ideal recedes, and with it the divinity who is its definite embodiment. The growing power of idealization itself in one of its activities thus makes perfection seem far beyond this world. The strain so prominent in high religion, by which the substance of things hoped for appears remote and without feeling for our nature, thus itself is from our nature, seeking far and wide its own completion.

There is also a striving in the opposite direction. The Ideal is the end and goal of man's own solemn purpose. And not only does he put forth effort toward it, but he feels its solicitation, its free constraint upon him. Love—Eros, in the old story—is born of Plenty and Want ; and the Ideal, formed to satisfy desire, shows man what he possesses and what he lacks ; it witnesses to his present nature as well as to that nature's further movement. Like the flying arrow, man is both where he is and where he is not. And since the image of the Perfect is a foreshadowing of what the man believes to be most substantial and real in the world, and yet is a deliverance of his own inner



nature, he cannot well escape some sense of his kinship with perfection ; though it be a stern judge, it is of his blood. The ideal is in touch with man's own surest impulses and reinforces them while bringing them to order ; and thus with all its transcendence it must, unless forcibly prevented, be felt as coming near and having its place by the very hearth of character.

The ideal in its personal form, as God, is therefore natively both far and near—far, because infinitely apart from all that mars our life ; near, because he moves in and through our deepest promptings. That to which we look is of glorified appearance, as to a lover's eyes, and far removed ; but just because there is this adoration, man's fortune and his God are eternally joined, and in the sure, mild drawing of the distant Best the union is as real as the separation.

But if, in the normal course, God is perceived to be both near and far, this is not inevitable. The forces of attraction and repulsion often are strangely proportioned. Where the idealizing power is weak or unschooled, as in men of rudimentary culture, the intimacy may leave almost nothing of aloofness ; the gods may be little more than hewers of wood and drawers of water for men, to be flogged and dismissed when they prove intractable. And even in our modern cities the sublimity of the Divine seems occasionally almost lost in easy and familiar intercourse.

Such extremity of nearness has its opposing counterpart where the idealizing power attains a morbid excellence. The ideal existence is now refined and sublimated until it no longer holds—no longer awakens—the sense of affinity. It becomes a mere wraith of what man is, or perhaps of what he is not, and brings only chill instead of reinforcement to the more enduring of our powers.

Variable as is the course of religion, there may already have appeared, even in this scant account, certain traits to serve for its identity. To some it may seem just if we accept the expression used some moments past, that religion

is man's whole bearing toward the apparent Best or Greatest. The wavering incongruities of reverence obtain in this a kind of intelligibility: they are due to the measureless variety of things which are most impressive for different types and stages of mental growth, and to the great diversity of response which this impressiveness evokes. Man in his restless mental wandering finds all manner of objects that seem for the time to be that Greatest for which he always has a place prepared. At one time he discovers it in what is immense in size; and again, like the child, he feels even more strongly the fascination, the significance, of little things. Moreover, the tangle of human impulse and passion brings it to pass that whatever seems most impressive is received, here with fear, and there with confidence; now with cupidity, and again with unselfish gifts; until, passing through joy and sadness, action and repose, pictured and imageless contemplation, the whole cycle of human powers has been summoned forth by this meeting with the Great.

But in spite of the endless variety of things to which humanity in its untiring eagerness gives recognition, there runs a fairly constant impulse to regard the Greatest as conscious, after some animal or human or divine manner. And this at once makes for a certain deep-hidden similarity in things worshipped, while the contrasts lie more upon the surface. Indeed, it is not hard to observe, in the great range of what is worshipped, that the outward diversity is far greater than the inward. The difference between the mind of beast and man and archangel is a difference long but narrow, like that between seed and plant and tree; and bears no parallel to the infinite breadth and length of difference in those objects—sunsets, justice, camels, kettles, stars—that lie in the world of life and thought and things. Minds contain or touch diversity, rather than are diverse. And consequently the objects of worship are at once seen to have narrower variations, when beneath their flaring contrasts is so often found the common fact of consciousness,

dim or clear, with all its old familiarities. Like masquers when the hour has struck, the well-known faces are no longer hidden.

But while the Greatest is normally felt to be conscious, the opposite may appear by exception. The doubt which some have shared with Jowett, that consciousness or personality may possibly be but a form of limited existence and therefore unfit to be an attribute of that perfect greatness which is infinitude—this uncertainty deepens into conviction with many worshippers, yet without destroying the stern devotion to the Best, that makes their faith religious. The extinction of selfhood, which is so often the goal of all desire in Buddhist scripture—while felt by some to be the extinction merely of selfishness—means with others the utter passing away of conscious life, like a candle-flame snuffed out. It would be interesting to determine whether in this yearning for life's close, even when it is in honour of no god, there may not still be a devotion unrecognized by the worshipper himself, to some characterless form of consciousness. The honour paid the self is quite apparent : by one's inherent power the escape from life and evil is to be accomplished. And with the strictest denial of the last trace of consciousness when Nirvana is attained, there is desired perhaps, by a kind of paradox, the consciousness, the felt relief and bliss, of non-existence, rather than non-existence pure and absolute. A dim, uncircumscribed psychic life that is neither mine nor thine would thus persist hidden in the ideal.

If this is avoided by the more consistent, and the last glimmer of consciousness, and indeed of reality in any form, fades from the ideal, religion loses a most important and characteristic mark, so far as its Object is concerned, while still retaining a religious feature in the attitude of the worshipper. Reverence continues ; a Best and Greatest is still conceived and honoured ; but all the forms of reality actual or imaginable are felt to be unworthy of being called by its name. The Supreme is described throughout by negatives

and by removing it to the uttermost from all those attributes which enter into reality as known to us.

It is possible to regard this type of religion as an after-glow in the heart when the object of devotion has disappeared entirely from the intellectual view. The impulse to value life—to feel the importance especially of men and all that is manlike—is too deep in us by birth and training to be easily uprooted. An impulse so habitual, so profound, will of necessity continue by sheer momentum, even should all outward occasion be removed or inwardly denied. However illogical, it is not foreign to the mind to have objectless reverence, any more than to have objectless dread. There is here a curious truncation of the sentiment of worth—the continuation of its form and habits, but with protest all the while that no real and final worth can anywhere be found. And in particular all worth is denied to the mind; upon which, so far as science can help us to see, all appreciation, all value in anything, all outward justification as well as inward prompting to esteem, must finally rest. And yet in such anomaly of faith, with its recognition of a Greatest that cannot exist, there goes a strange depth of feeling, an intent reflection which, if it might be transferred, would enrich many a religion that in other ways is already so much richer.

In thinking of religion as our response to that which thus far has revealed itself to us as greatest, as of most value or significance, there is no need that this should imply singleness. A little logic might give the impression that the Best must needs be one and alone; but the best, as it appears to us, may be a group of beings, a class, a society. In the worship of the Olympians, Zeus was often spoken of as supreme; and yet here, as in so many religions of this polytheistic kind, the whole company of the immortals was felt to be needed to exemplify the supremely great, each member adding some unique quality. Zeus, it is true, was mightiest; but without Athene and Apollo and all the other companions of his court, he would have seemed shorn



of his strength and splendour. Their presence and even opposition completed the picture. So the best, here and often elsewhere, lies in an unstudied composition of many parts, and not in some separate one, even though this be chief.

And finally there is no right occasion to identify that which man feels to be most significant with the Infinite. There often is a groping for the limitless, and men have shown indecision as to what is the best example and embodiment of this limitless or infinite. With some it is the sky as a manifestation of spatial endlessness ; while others look to the weight and immensity of the physical All, or to Mind or Reason as the least hampered side of personality. Or finally the Infinite is found in some unimaginable existence or lack of existence, higher than all these and free from their confinement. But this is the habit only of certain minds. Their neighbours give no signs of searching for the boundless, but turn from these too expansive things toward what is more within the compass of their sympathies, to be in some way subdued by trees or animals or individual men. Certain types of mind, indeed, throughout have felt the attractiveness of the limited. The child, with its native wonder and joy in the diminution of things perhaps more than in their enlargement, hints at a real and important trend even in religion. Men of logic and mathematics and philosophy, esteeming what is limitless and absolute abstractly, have much to answer for, because they have confused our natural sense of value. For if by the Ideal we mean what is most deeply satisfying and admirable, there is no necessity that this should display extraordinary quantity or exclude existence outside itself. We may freely go with the old-time Bishop of Canterbury in saying that God is that Being than which a greater cannot be thought. But the greatness seems to be lessened rather than increased by a too intemperate insistence on quantitative infinitude ; just as a face or gem could not, without loss of its own peculiar charm, be endlessly increased in size. It

is true that as the critical power advances, infinitude does not of necessity mean mere space-extent or unlimited force, but, often, an all-inclusiveness, an absolute unity that excludes all other free existence. Still it is possible that perfection may even in this find its defeat, rather than its fulfilment. If so, it would not be difficult for some to decide that perfection without infinitude would seem more in keeping with their idea of the Divine, than would infinitude that fell short of perfect admirableness. Accordingly it would, perhaps, be truer to say that religion is the effort to maintain communion, not with the infinite, but with that which possesses supreme worth—which is, perhaps, but a deeper kind of infinitude. Through uncertain ways man stumbles forward to meet supremacy, misled often, and blind to the true nature of its credentials. Yet in all his wanderings, he renders homage to some portion or distant representative of what is eminent, since that uncommon and profound Perfection, which alone is greatest and best, can without deceit and without shadow of turning appear to men in various forms.

## CHAPTER XXV

### STANDARDS OF RELIGION

WHEN we review the various forms in which men think of divinity and express their reverence, we involuntarily ask, "Which of these is better, and which worse?"—a question difficult of answer, and carrying the mind at once beyond the interest and method thus far followed, where we attempt merely to observe and explain. To consider such a question at all will need from the reader that grant of freedom which, at the beginning of this study, it was said would be asked at the close. And even then an effort should be made, perhaps, not so much to give a definite and direct answer to the question, as to offer some of the standards for judging rival forms of religion and to show something of their application—standards that seem closest to the psychological facts, amongst which our course has lain.

And first would come this, that *the pure and continued expression of any single religious motive is not desirable*. For, indeed, religious motives, like muscles, work best in opposition. The evidence has perhaps made it clear that certain antagonistic forces exist in the very nature of reverence itself, and that there is often a wild excess when one of these opposite strivings frees itself, by a kind of violence, from its opponent. When other things are equal, religions will prove acceptable according to the measure in which they avoid such excess by retaining a vigorous check and antagonism among their energies. Yet such a thought should be supplemented at once, inasmuch as

while retaining each and both of two opposing motives, *one motive may well be dominant.*

In accord with these two principles, we should look for a fine inner adjustment when religion is at its best. Its followers will display—to be more definite—neither unmixed scorn nor unmixed approval of the self, but a certain blend of self-reliance and distrust. For while the contemplation of the ideal brings humility, for no flesh may glory in its presence, yet the sense that upon us in some measure depends its realization, gives us even in our own eyes an added dignity. With the disappointment felt toward themselves that so little has yet been accomplished, men will value their better elements, they will rejoice in the self that is to be ; they will be eager to form the self of failure according to the self that is foretold.

Yet the follower of such a religion will regard as a bane any absorption of interest in the self ; he will look outward chiefly, and here, too, with a nice interplay of feelings, with sympathies at once universal and exacting. All men will be seen as kindred, as fellows, yet with some measure of that deep regret to which his own self moves him. In feeling bound to all, he will not keep back his anger toward those who obstinately check the coming of the good. Sympathy and aversion will be proportioned to the degree in which, deep within men, is found the will to become citizens of an unseen land. Sympathy and shrewd hopefulness, however, will dominate ; and so the wide survey that includes what is outward and within, what is actual and what hoped for, will bring neither despair nor gaiety, but a mellowed gladness, as in listening to solemn music.

Our canons, moreover, with their inherent temperance, will claim approval in so far as religion holds a mid-course between extreme acceptance of the world and extreme renunciation. Such a religion, rejecting the maxim ‘ Whatever is, is right,’ acknowledges a diabolic strain in this world, and yet will not think of desertion after any manner even distantly resembling seclusion in a monastery or flight to the



desert. It believes that the good must be realized by co-operation and human society, even with all its noisy and distracting institutions. The world is of the right stuff, but of wrong arrangement. And thus by approving and denouncing with a sharply dividing mind, the impulses of acceptance and rejection that are so ready each to expel the other and bring mischief work in harmony for high ends.

Our normal religion, that accepts the world and yet accepts it as a place wherein is to be realized a world of another order, feels the call to action. But it is not a partisan of action that is purely expressive and unuseful, or that is expressive only in being useful. It finds room for acts both ritual and utilitarian. The passion of loyalty will naturally be expressed in religion, as elsewhere, not alone by prudent labour, but by acts that have no end beyond mere utterance—like the patriot's honour to the flag, or the lover's bringing of a garland.

Its restraint, furthermore, will not allow such a religion to lose itself in activity even of varied kinds, but balances action with reception. Along with life and conduct in a world of turmoil, there must be what the anchorite seeks, but seeks too externally—an untroubled solitude whence the spirit issues refreshed for duty. The high qualities of those who seek to correct their busy service with passivity cannot well be hid. Such a spirit often goes with a serenity of temper as of men who feel that divine things enfold human life. In itself it too often is an exaggeration, but exaggeration of an element that men need. For in the main, religion has not suffered most from disregard of things external; the constant menace has certainly not been that worship would become too refined, too much a matter of the heart, too desirous of inner light and leading. Thus the failing of those who turn away from action leans to virtue's side. Everyone can act, as everyone can talk; listening is the rarer talent. But as he makes a poor companion who can only listen, so the receptive, the appreciative attitude, even toward the Ideal, is not of itself ideal.

A religion, thus catholic by its acceptance both of activity and of its rival, contemplation, should be catholic further in its bearing toward the different forms of contemplation, by whose guidance it would have all acts performed. It will acknowledge the high office of that kind of thought, intuitive and revealing, that flows in upon and floods the mind when this seems passive ; but it will acknowledge the power and privilege also of that other kind of thought, cautious and laboured, that tests itself untiringly by logic and experience. Indeed, the course of events clearly points to a time when disregard of common knowledge and intelligence will seem as repugnant to the religious mind as disregard of common morals. For just as religion was long separate from duty to one's fellows, and only gradually did the feeling come that manly honour was as important to the gods as ceremonial ; so the separation of knowledge sharply into spiritual and secular, into the higher wisdom and the wisdom that grows of observation and by sympathy with the aims of one's fellow-men, has long continued, but is losing ground. Science, we may expect, will in this gradual way become a part of religion, and then it will be required of us to repent of our ignorance and fallacious thought as now of theft or slander. If some, because they are encouraged to ply their powers and look about them, lose their way or forget the goal, this is no excuse for leading all men blindfold by the hand. A certain not-too-timid prudence is here the better part, throwing men more upon their own resources and responsibility, being reconciled to see some receive injury lest the injury to many be far greater. Human reason and human learning are thus admitted to a high place in loyalty, yet without expelling all that does not bear the mark of intellect.

But cognition, as we found, exhibits still other inner rivalries than that between intuitive and critical thinking ; and of these, also, our adopted norms of religion urge a reconciliation. There should be a place for many styles and aids of knowledge—for the representation of duty and

divinity not alone by imageless and abstract conception, but also by the imageless, yet no longer abstract, experience from within. They should be represented even by the suggestive power of the fancy, as well as of physical symbols and symbolic action.

And justice should be done not simply to the rival modes of thinking, but also to thought's rival products. The opposing motives that clamour to dominate conduct and man's feeling toward himself and his surroundings, reappear augmented to claim control of his conception of God. But by holding them in mutual restraint, well-ordered religion believes in a divinity that is definite in outline and yet endlessly rich ; that is known and at the same time exceeds our knowledge ; a divinity whose purposes and sympathies extend infinitely beyond us, while enfolding and penetrating our being. There is an effort, in all of this, to possess the better elements both of monotheism and of polytheism. For the monotheist is apt to overprize the mere unity in his Ideal, forgetful that unity, if it grow too great, is tyrannous. Moral dignity, unswerving sympathy, and justice are, after all, more important elements in the divine conception ; and we may better believe in these great qualities, though vested in many gods, than adopt a monotheism that leaves them out. Indeed, more than once in history a divine unity and concord has been attained at a cost of human colour and the rich play of interest and feeling. Polytheism makes sure of just such qualities ; and if, in holding them fast, it holds fast much that is unworshipful—ugliness, often, and treachery and low passion—this must not blind us to the importance of the principle for which polytheism stands. The Ideal is not merely a unity ; it is quite as much a wealth and a diversity. So that Triune monotheism might be looked upon, perhaps, as a measure of religious self-protection. It is an anchor cast to windward, lest the drift toward unity wreck the very conception of the Ideal. There is an insistence both on the divine unity and on the divine manifoldness—often,

it is true, at a cost of great inward distress as to the means of their reconciliation, but guided all the while by a right instinct not to let some one abstract element in the Ideal dominate and exclude the rest. Those opposing tendencies of thought, which at first seem irreconcilable and to be taken singly or not at all, are thus manfully conjoined.

The supreme virtue of thought, however, is not its balance and vigour and richness, but its veracity. Accordingly a third rule to guide our judgment may be that *the assertions of religion, as to what is real, should be true*. And this at once brings us to a distant region where we are met by Pilate's question; and also by the thought that it is not the office of religion to *know*, but only to be loyal—that, if there are avenues to truth, they lie not in religion, but in science and philosophy. Such troubling doubts and denials can, I believe, be downed by no demonstration. The most that here will be attempted will be to present with the least of argument what seems a juster view.

The point from which we must start is, I believe, that there are several varieties of truth. There are, for example, the expedient beliefs of the pragmatist—judgments that are serviceable and yet describe no existent fact. Such was Malebranche's idea of the *vérité* in the reports of the senses. There is, beside this, a truth of mere consistency, such as we have in branches of mathematics where, upon assuming certain relations, others follow by a logical compulsion. Somewhat distinct from this, and yet not entirely so, lies the region of value, of worth—where we affirm what is consistent, not with certain bare intellectual relations, as in mathematics, but with deep needs and impulses of our nature other than pure intellect. Finally there are the truths of fact, of reality; as when memory tells me of the events of yesterday, or I look out and see that the day is drawing to a close, or look within and find misgiving or cheer. There is, in all these, some picture or representation of actual existence—a kind of truth kindred to the others, but also different.



Religion, I believe, is concerned with this full and varied nature of truth. The worshipper, when his faith is at its best, believes usefully, and in all consistency, and with a just sense of relative values. But were his hold upon truth *only* of these ; were truth no longer trustworthy also as an *expression of fact*, the mind uncorrupted by learning would feel that the very life had gone from thought and intercourse. "Is friendship," one would ask, "nothing but loyalty to a goal? Is not my love for my friend robbed of its very meaning, however much might remain of inner ministry and gratification, when it ceases to be a thing of value *for him* as well as for me? My belief in him is not a mere expression of respect for an idea helpful to me and self-consistent, but of an idea picturing a fact, a solid reality, namely another person, with sympathies like my own!" In the same manner religion feels itself concerned with a larger world, not existent merely in idea, but potent and actual. Man's relation to that world may as yet be insufficient ; there is much that is existent merely in hope and in idea ; yet the basic fact of some great reality, that is capable of coming into closer relation with humanity, is the confident belief of the reverent. Whether the belief be well or ill-grounded is surely a concern of religion. For worship, it makes a wide difference whether reality shall actually prove to be of one character rather than another. Religion, therefore, is interested not simply in being loyal, but in knowing what it is loyal to ; indeed, in knowing whether the universe is such that sincere and abounding loyalty is possible.

But what of the sources from which the truth, of such deep concern to religion, is derived? Shall we say that sound religion will lay no claim to special knowledge ; that it will gladly see a division of employments, and receive its truth wholly from science and philosophy, having as its peculiar care simply the worship of the reality which these disclose?

In answer, there might be stated the fourth of our canons,

that *religion is justified in taking part in the discovery of the truth*; and that a religion shall not be valued in proportion to its own sense of inability to know. The considerations that seem to make this not unreasonable have some range, and will demand of the reader, for their hearing, a store of patience.

There are several great activities, or interests, each with a claim to examine and report upon the character of reality—claiming, if not an exclusive power to reveal what is real, at least a power supplemental to that of its fellows. Each of these great interests stirs the mind to dissatisfaction with the facts at hand, and urges it to correct the impression which they make. The *real* world, each in its own way prompts us to believe, is different from the world directly observed; and by bringing into order the chaos of things presented by eye and ear, there is an attempt to quiet our deep unrest. The idealizing act, as an earlier chapter showed, is impelled by many needs and desires. And some of these will now be spoken of again, but no longer as of influence merely in fact, but of influence by right and to be fostered.

The need of *explanation* and the effort made by the scientist to satisfy that need comes at once to mind. But largely because the work of explanation is so familiar, and because the satisfaction which it offers is so prized, the very character of scientific labour is readily misunderstood. For in the study of nature there is far less of mere passive record and far more of imaginative rearrangement than the lay mind is accustomed to believe. He looks upon the scientific procedure as something rigorous and demonstrable at every point. Each step, he feels, is checked and verified, and under all is a wide and sure foundation of fact observed. There is much to warrant a confidence such as this. And yet, the more the structure of science is scrutinized, the more is there seen to enter into it a certain confidence, never fully justified by experience itself, that there are causes

everywhere, regular antecedents for every possible event. Actual observation has found such causes only within narrow limits; and even these are discovered only by assuming in every observation the truth of the very principle which the observation seems to verify. Deep within us is the desire for causal explanation; and largely because we are ill at ease until this desire is gratified we come at last to believe unhesitatingly in that kind of universe which alone makes explanation possible.

It is therefore a mistake to imagine that in the scientific approach to truth nothing is taken for granted, and that reality itself is passively received in the form in which it is imprinted on the senses. On the contrary, scientific labour is always a sifting and rearranging and supplementing of what the senses offer; a rearrangement and supplementing that is guided by the special ideal and assumption of a *world that is perfectly intelligible causally*. Our belief that everything we observe has a universe or system of things behind it, all whose parts and processes are connected in accord with precise and universal rules—this is not a belief which can be proved by observation and experiment. It is not a discovery; it is a principle of discovery. We accept its truth; we believe that the world is causally intelligible; and guided by this belief the world of what is real begins to appear in outline before our minds. And this outline is far larger than the mere mass and sum of what we actually see.

But further than this, the mind is *logically* restless. The judgments suggested by our observations of fact are felt to be intellectually unsatisfying; they are felt to clash and to be in need of a setting, a background, not so much to cause as to justify them. They presuppose other judgments, and so the intellect revises and adds, in an attempt to satisfy this craving for a better object of thought than what is directly before us. All men are subject to this strange impulse of reason; but only the specialist, the logician, knows its refinements and has leisure and skill for its full play. In all, save those who are schooled to doubt,

there is a common confidence that *the world is logically complete and consistent*; that it answers to the demands of reason. Were we ever to master its details, we believe, the world of entire reality would appear not merely a causal, but also a rational, order.

If we may name next a need and impulse which to many within the schools would seem of less moment, it would be that of beauty. In reaching toward the world that is true and real, there is always a hidden suggestion that it will satisfy a certain craving for the impressive and the delightful. Such a longing may be rebuked or even smothered, but in the unschooled man, and in most men with all their schooling, it lives on, often their ruling instinct. As in an account of a man's life that was not a satire, few could endure to have equal weight given to all the facts—being told which shoe he put on first, and at which end he broke his morning egg, in as grave detail as of his election to Congress or his first battle—but should feel how insufferable was its disregard of dramatic needs: so, in a larger and wider way, we are influenced in our view of the world as a whole. In the work of rearranging and supplementing the crude impressions we receive, in order to bring before our minds the world which we will acknowledge real, there is the steady expectation and desire that in this true and real world the fragments of experience will be so united and framed that all will appear fair. Such a motive is of deep effect upon our judgment of truth. It cautions us here and nods encouragingly there. And so we may say that beauty, too, with all its silent ways, is a principle of discovery. Some day its prophet will appear; but until then, we must name it with less assurance than we do causality and the principle of sufficient reason; for it seems less authoritative, less definite in its decisions. Yet there is the constant quiet intimation that, with all its other completeness, the world is also *æsthetically satisfying*; that were the whole before us in a vision, this would be beatific, the world would appear of perfect beauty.



Finally there is a need, deeper, I believe, than any yet named, the need of sympathy, and of full companionship. And like the other needs, it, too, brings its own great belief, that *the world is morally harmonious*. Such a belief is no less widespread than that of causal regularity; it is of as ancient lineage; it subdues the mind to no less obedience. And as the causal, logical, and æsthetic principles drive us to supplement what is given through eyes and ears, by building behind and around it an ampler world—a world which we know only through intermediaries but which we cannot doubt, since it alone makes our sense-reports coherent—so we are urged to accept still another guide in this work of bringing into order our sense impressions. There is something that tells us to connect and surround the fragments of experience in such wise that the whole will answer to the moral impulse. Shut within our little cell of self we cannot see that the whole *is* moral, more than we can see that it is beautiful or reasonable or that it furnishes a causal explanation of all we experience. As with these other beliefs, so with this; its hold upon us is disproportionate to the evidence which can be offered in its support. Indeed, there is nothing, either in observation or in argument, that well can prove it. If we will not believe, there is no recourse; no one can demonstrate to us that morality runs through the universe, more than that causation runs through all. If accepted, however, the moral principle leads to a more spacious world, as does the causal principle. Whatever is needed causally to explain my sensations is as real for me as are they; and likewise, whatsoever is absolutely needed to make my experience morally intelligible I shall hold to, as having the solid reality of experience itself.

But lest the moral principle seem too insecure and airy thus to be placed amongst the guides of our intelligence, it should be said that under its leadings there is room and demand for the utmost critical care. Just as the belief in causation does not leave us a prey to every whimsy, nor offer a substitute for careful scrutiny; just as it does not

tell us *what* is the cause of a given occurrence, but bids us find it, giving us but the emptiest form of events, and requiring us to use all manner of patient checks and corrections before deciding what is the actual system of events that fills this form, so the acceptance of the moral principle does not of itself reveal what, in all definiteness, that moral world is, but demands of us observation and critical cunning before we decide what is the concrete system of fact that meets this high demand for perfect comradeship.

Furthermore, the moral principle does not point to truth quite beyond the limits of observation, in the religious region merely. It is demonstrably at work in shaping for us the world of everyday reality. Were it not for its prompting, there is no compulsive reason, according to our present knowledge, for believing in the existence of other minds. If in fashioning our idea of the world, we were to surrender ourselves wholly to the scientific spirit ; making no assumption that was not absolutely needed to explain, getting our facts into the snuggest possible arrangement, never multiplying essences beyond bare causal necessity—if we were to accept without shadow of reserve this rigid scientific method, each, so far as we now can see, would rest convinced that his was the only mind in the universe. Our friends that now are would then be for us mere bodies governed by curious laws of reflex or other physiological action ; unconscious automata, the products of natural selection or of whatever other physical mechanism we might accept. Everything in the observed facts themselves could thus be adequately explained. For I cannot perceive the mental portion of my neighbour, nor is this absolutely required to account for his physical behaviour, which I *can* observe. Indeed, in a theory of the relation of mind and body which has proved acceptable to many—the theory of ‘parallelism’—mind is of no service whatsoever in accounting for the body’s action. Since we should thus have far less to explain and what remained would be far simpler of explanation, the purely scientific problems would be greatly simplified were

I to suppose that the world held but myself as its single centre of thought and will.

Yet every sane mind rejects such a view. And why? Because the social, the moral instincts are outraged by it. "We demand more than explanation," they cry; "more than a world that can *cause* things. Ours must be a world wherein there is mutual recognition, mutual regard. An ineradicable sense of the value of others requires that they, too, be real." This conviction, then, scientifically so un-called-for, that in addition to my own mind and the physical world about me, there are companions as real as myself, illustrates the manner in which the utterances that spring from explanatory needs may be insufficient, and receive supplement from a moral source.

The enlargement of the universe according to the ways of religion is, in the main, but a further yielding to this rightful impulse. As we will not rest content with things, but require the company of human minds; so, in turn, we look toward something more significant even than our fellow-men. The world most real, so the reverent generally believe, is such that it satisfies the demand of the spirit for full intercourse.

There seems good reason to accept this principle, as one among several great guides to what is real. Nor upon acceptance of it is our liberty of judgment wholly gone. We still are free to reject any particular description of that deep reality; we may point out wherein it fails to meet the requirements of true reverence and intercourse. But we cannot, I believe, rightly hold that the requirement itself is illusory; we cannot say that in the very undertaking to represent a form of reality answering such a requirement religion has transgressed. Religion, too, has a voice in determining truth. It has a right, with art and science and philosophy, to express its peculiar need. And the intelligent thought of mankind will, in the end, regard as partial, and will attempt to correct, any view of the world that fails to satisfy this need. Religion, therefore, must hold that

Divinity sustains the world, looking upon men with perfect understanding. Such a conviction will be surrendered for one, if possible, still richer morally ; but never for a belief that leaves the mind forever estranged and desolate.

One might close with this attempt to state some of the proper standards for ascribing excellence to religion—its need of bringing many clashing impulses into vigorous order ; its need of truth, and of partaking in the work of judging what is true. Yet it is hard to restrain a backward glance that will now make doubly clear the way we have come.

The scientific interest in religion leads deep into human nature, where the observer's sight at best must grow confused with the multitude of things seen in a half-light that passes into darkness. But not only is the object of our study almost unmatched in its obscurity, but it is now apparent that the method here employed is incapable, even were it used with skill, of bringing to view the total truth. We have been yielding ourselves to the explanatory impulse and to the special rules that have come to govern it. The religious ideal and all the other expressions of devotion have been spoken of throughout as though their full account might be found among purely natural influences. It is part of the scientific procedure to seek for its peculiar kind of explanation in the region of observed events alone ; and there has been no attempt, except at the very close, to exceed this special method. And yet there cannot longer be any illusion as to this particular way. For even if the scientific purpose could be accomplished, and the presence and character of the Ideal and all man's devotion to it could be explained naturally and with perfect accuracy, this would not imply that no other mode of regarding it were reasonable.

The attempt to explain psychologically the religious life, and especially the vision of the Ideal, will, if this be borne in mind, hardly seem an effort to explain it away and to



destroy its claim to men's fidelity. Indeed, the truer insight into the scientific method must restore, rather than weaken, our confidence in the leading of perfection. Science, as we have seen, must itself proceed by trusting the truth of an ideal—that the world is a perfect order causally—and this ideal, too, as reflected in men's minds, has its own history and causes, the discovery of which does not destroy the truth of that reflection. The orderliness of the world is a perpetual fact although the idea of order is itself of historic growth and is scientifically explicable. To explain science itself by mental impulse and desire would be no evidence that its ideal were purely in us, and without external correspondence.

Likewise the discovery of the natural causes of religion would not imply that its ideal world had no reality save in men's thought—that something corresponding to our idea of the Best had no interest in gradually awakening its own image and desire in men. The dim and broken image of perfection may well be formed in sympathy and correspondence with a Perfection that is most real. Nor does the evidence that this image in us has its outer counterpart depend on some gap or error in the scientific explanation, nor become weak as the scientific explanation gains in strength. The truth may well be, that those definite causes which work lawfully, as science would describe, in our mental life and in external nature and by intercourse with other men, are themselves sanctioned by the Best, as the means by which its own outline shall gradually appear in the clouded minds of men. The dawning appearance would then be entirely natural and yet desired by the Good, and thus be intelligible in two entirely different ways, each without inner flaw or weakness.



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